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# Journal

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« 19<sup>TH</sup> YEAR IN CIRCULATION »

JUNE - 2024



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## INDIA'S NARENDRA MODI SWORN IN AS COUNTRY'S PRIME MINISTER FOR A THIRD TERM

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party has formed a coalition government with several partners after losing its outright majority in the election.

Narendra Modi has been sworn in as India's prime minister for a third term, after a shock election setback that will test his ability to ensure policy certainty in a coalition government in the world's most populous nation.

India's President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Modi at a ceremony on Sunday, June 9th 2024 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the president's palace in New Delhi, attended by thousands of dignitaries, including the leaders of seven neighbouring countries, Bollywood stars and industrialists.

"Honoured to serve Bharat," Modi posted on X, minutes before he was sworn in, referring to India's name in Indian languages.

Supporters cheered, clapped and chanted "Modi, Modi" as the 73-year-old leader, dressed in a white kurta tunic and blue half jacket, was called to take his oath.

After being sworn in, Modi, flanked by officials from his Hindu-nationalist party and leaders of his coalition partners, vowed to protect India's constitution.

Modi was followed by senior ministers in the previous government: Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and Piyush Goyal, among others, whose portfolios are yet to be announced.

Modi, who started as a publicist of the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is only the second person after independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru to serve a third straight



Narendra Modi arrives to take the oath as the prime minister of India at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, in New Delhi, India

term as prime minister.

He secured the third term after a multi-stage election that concluded on June 1 with the support of 14 regional parties in his BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. In the previous two terms, his party had won an outright majority.

Final election results showed Modi's BJP won 240 seats, well below the 272 needed for a majority. Together, the parties in the NDA coalition secured 293 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament.

Modi, 73, is only the second Indian prime minister to win a third straight term.

On Sunday, he and 71 ministers took the oath of office at India's presidential palace,

Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi. 61 of them were from the BJP while the remaining were BJP's NDA allies. Only seven of them were women, and not a single one from the Muslim community, the largest minority group in India whose political representation as lawmakers has shrunk under Modi.

The results, which defied exit polls that predicted a landslide for the BJP, left Modi's coalition government largely dependent on two key regional allies — the Telugu Desam Party in southern Andhra Pradesh state and Janata Dal (United) in eastern Bihar state — to stay in power. On Sunday, two lawmakers from each party were sworn in as ministers.

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# Mississauga's new mayor is Carolyn Parrish

Parrish, who has served on Mississauga city council for 13 years in addition to the same amount of time spent as an MP in Ottawa, fended off her three main challengers in Mississauga's mayoral byelection tonight to succeed Bonnie Crombie, who left in January to lead the Ontario Liberal Party.

Parrish topped a largest-ever field of 20 candidates for the city's top seat, garnering 43,494 votes. Current Mississauga councillors Alvin Tedjo (35,005), Dipika Damerla (27,119) and Stephen Dasko (22,408) finished second through fourth, respectively.

Parrish resigned from the Ward

**Speaking to reporters at the Mississauga Convention Centre after the race had been decided, Parrish said she wasn't overly concerned by recent polls that showed her three main competitors appeared to be closing the gap on her.**

5 council seat in March to run for mayor. That vacancy on council was also filled in tonight's byelection, with Natalie Hart earning 3,707 votes to finish first in a 15-candidate field.

Speaking to reporters at the Mississauga Convention Centre after the race had been decided, Parrish said she wasn't overly concerned by recent polls that showed her three main competitors appeared to be closing

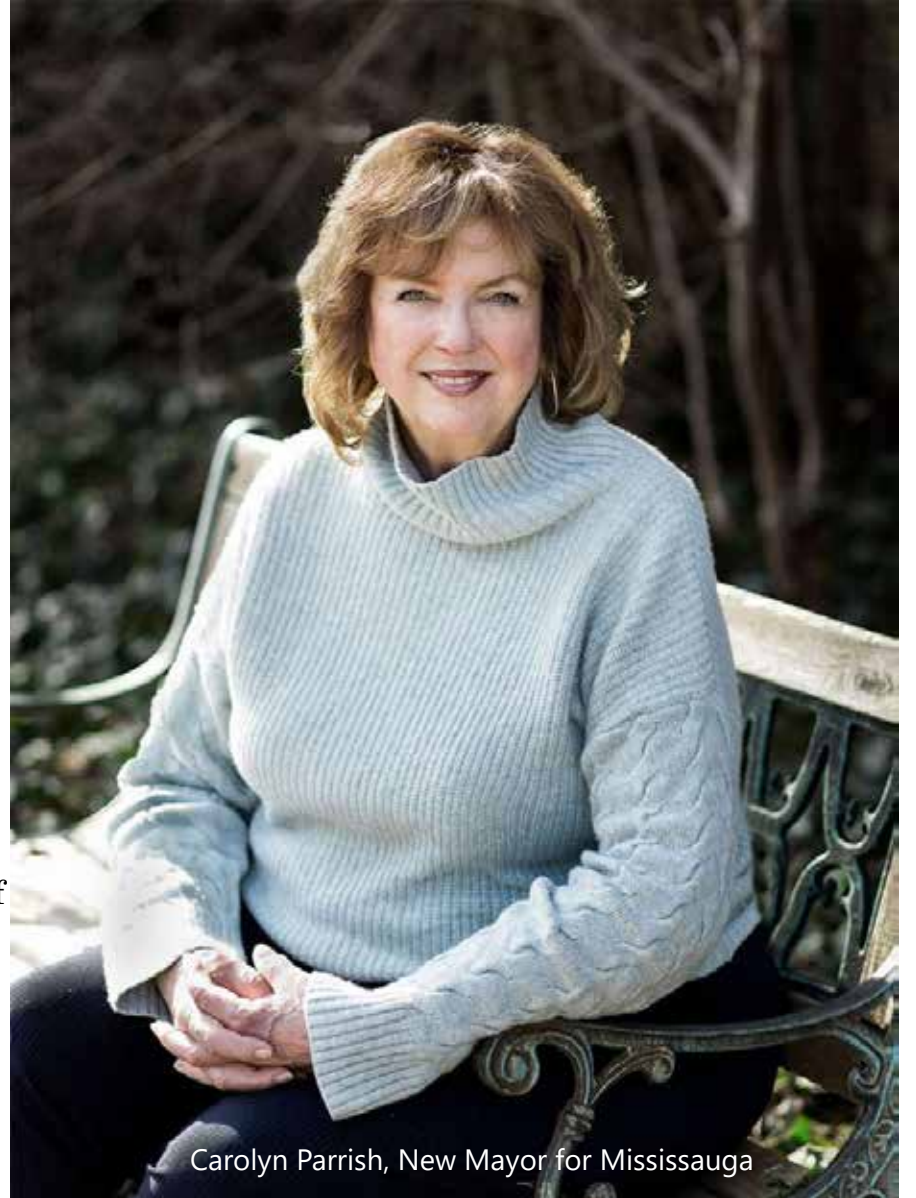
the gap on her. Parrish had led more comfortably in earlier polling before deciding a month or so ago she wasn't going to take part in any additional all-candidates debates.

In a brief victory speech, the veteran politician who has become known the past two decades or so for being at times brash and outspoken — both in Mississauga and Ottawa — tossed aside prepared remarks mid-stream to speak "off script."

"I'm not going to read all this," she declared to a boisterous and responsive crowd of supporters. "It's way too much."

Notes set aside, the city's new mayor told the large crowd her first order of business will be to link arms with fellow Peel mayors in Brampton and Caledon and march to Queen's Park — and Ottawa if necessary — to fight for a fair share for the three municipalities when it comes to funding received for social services.

"The region (of Peel) is going to be stronger now because you're going to have three mayors that actually get along," Parrish began, "and we will



Carolyn Parrish, New Mayor for Mississauga

be formidable when we go to Queen's Park or to Ottawa to tell them we need our fair share of funding here (in Peel).

"As you all know, I can be quite charming," she quipped, the remark eliciting the expected laughter from the crowd. "And you also know I can be quite forceful. We're going to mix charm and force and we're going to take over the world."

The candidates were vying to become the seventh mayor in Mississauga's history, if you go back earlier than 1974, when Mississauga became a city.

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## Monsoon Journal Marks 19th Year in Publication as it Remembers its Co-Founder, My Dad, Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran on the First Year Thithi

By Harrish Thirukumaran

Over the course of this past year, I have been going through a period of change as I recover from personal grief and loss of my Dad, Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran. This June marks a year as the Monsoon Journal community mourn his loss as one of its co-founders. It was one of many roles that he held throughout his lifetime. The Monsoon Journal was a voice for him to follow his passion for elevating the Tamil and broader South Asian culture. This was accomplished through publications available at physical storefronts across the Greater Toronto Area and in cyberspace.

In the Tamil Hindu tradition typically, the first-year anniversary for a loss is marked by a Thithi. This refers to the day your loved one passed according to the moon phase and the month. Rituals, also known as Thevasam in Tamil, are acts that the children or loved ones perform for the deceased at a Hindu temple or the home in commemorating their departed parent or loved one. Food is also typically distributed to others including close loved ones of the deceased to ensure peace enriches their soul.

Through these rituals, we hope that our loved one attains 'moksha' or liberation from the cycle of rebirth after the conclusion of the physical journey that they led on Earth. The practices do vary across families and people in the South Asian community, but their purpose remains clear: to memorialize their loved one and their impact. This ritual also signals the end of their worldly relationship with that person. It serves as a refreshing reminder that any negative feelings or thoughts like shame or regret must not weigh them down. It gives the loved ones a sense of peace.

As a son observing this day of remembrance, I see it as a stage where I can express my gratitude to him for moulding me into the kind of person that I am today. Additionally, it lets me continue to absorb his various lessons to help carry myself forward. As we reach this one-year mark, I notice how I have started to look beyond the mere loss, leading to more introspection and a sense of wonder about the life journey in terms of the big picture as well as the day-to-day.

On this July 4th as I observe my Dad's Thithi, I hope the readers of this newspaper also get to release deep feelings of negativity. While these rituals are intended to give the soul of our loved one peace, it also is an antidote for the performer of the ritual who shares a deep connection with the person who has now passed away. It is this kind of idea where we look beyond the rituals and understand the true essence of these traditions that, I believe, my Dad was promoting for the Tamil community through the Monsoon Journal.



Remembering Monsoon Journal's Co-Founder, Late Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran at his 1st Anniversary

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My Dad's profound celebration and enthusiasm for Tamil and South Asian culture as well as Hinduism uplifted his fellow peers in the Tamil community and continues to do so. Whether that was his intention or not apart from his fondness for writing and literature, I am not entirely sure at this moment. But I can assure the readers of this paper that his legacy will live on through Monsoon Journal's contribution to Tamil community storytelling. Both his legacy and the storytelling will continue to be upheld as we celebrate the Monsoon Journal's 19th year in operation this month since its beginnings in June 2006.

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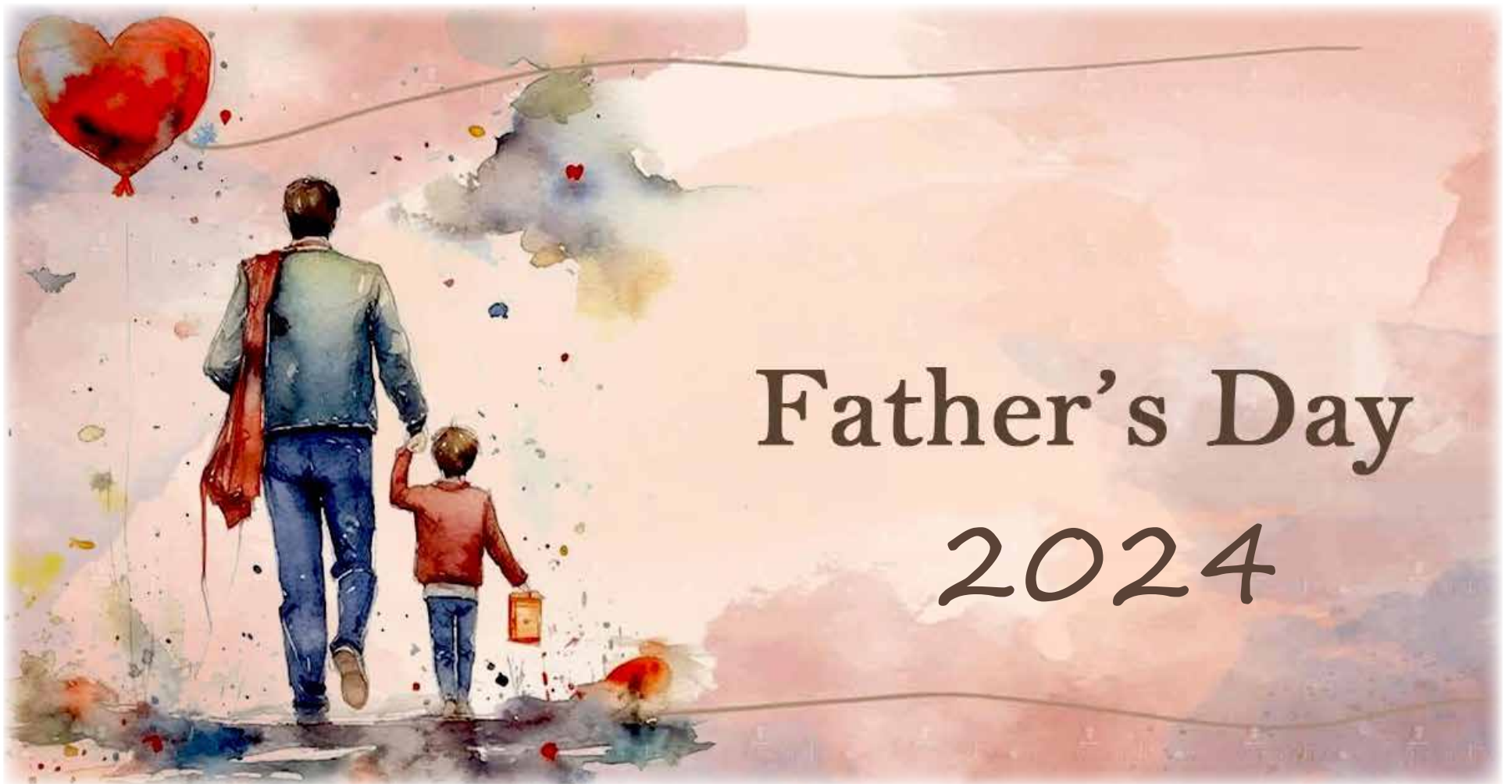
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SPECIAL FEATURE



# Father's Day 2024

**By: J A Rajah**

Father's Day is celebrated on the 3rd Sunday of June. It was President Nixon of the USA, who signed a law declaring that Father's Day be celebrated on the 3rd Sunday in June. It recognizes the role of fathers in the family. The modern role of fathers has changed so that mothers and fathers are partners, each taking more responsibility within family life. Fathers are now seen as significant influencers on children. They help to increase the intellect of their children. They help to boost the self-confidence

of their children. Fathers provide a positive role model for their children and help to promote/reinforce good behaviour. Active fathers have a unique opportunity to share their perspective on life and teach kids life's skills. Fathers provide a steady source of love and help to ensure that children grow up happy and healthy and aim high self-esteem. Though relatively, the mother's contribution is matchless, there are a number of dedicated fathers who have contributed significantly for their children's wellbeing. "Thanthai shol mika manthiramillai".

King Dasaratha in Ramayana, one of the great 'Kaapiyas' of

Tamil Literature, tells of how he helped his sons to excel in all arts of warfare and valor in addition to sending them to Dharamshalas, where they had excellent teachers like Thuronar.. Tamilian culture gives tremendous importance to the contribution of fathers for their children.

Jesus in his Parable of the Prodigal Son gives the portrait of a responsible father. The benevolent father was overjoyed when the prodigal son changed his mind and sought the help of his father. Jesus, the light of life shows us the profound parameters of "Fatherly Love."

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# Finance Minister Freeland Introduces Capital Gains Proposal in Parliament



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland tabled a ways and means motion in the House of Commons on June 10 as part of the Liberal government's upcoming legislation to increase the capital gains tax.

Ms. Freeland said the changes to the tax regime, which will be effective June 25, is a more "fiscally responsible" approach than the government taking on more debt.

"Canada could finance these critical investments by taking on more debt, but that would place an unfair burden on younger generations," Ms. Freeland said during a June 10 press conference. "Fiscal responsibility matters."

A ways and means motion is the first step to complete before tax change legislation can be tabled. The motion is expected to be voted on later next week.

The government announced its plan in April's 2024 budget to tax Canadian companies on 66.7 percent of their realized capital gains, up from the current 50 percent. Individuals will pay tax on 50 percent of the first \$250,000 of capital gains earned in the year, but 66.7 percent of any gain above that threshold under the new system. The Liberals later separated the proposed change from

its budget implementation legislation, promising to introduce it as a separate bill at a later date. The way investment gains are currently taxed means "well-off" Canadians who make money through investments can end up paying a lower marginal tax rate than those who earn incomes, such as nurses or plumbers, Ms. Freeland said. "That's not fairness. That's favouritism," she added.

The proposed tax change would not apply to Canadians selling their first home, the finance minister said, adding that the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption for Canadians selling their small business or farm would be raised from \$1 million to \$1.25 million. Ms. Freeland estimated that only 0.13 percent of Canadians, who have an average annual income of \$1.4 million, would be impacted by the capital gains tax change.

The proposed capital gains tax increase has proven to be controversial among business groups, with the Canadian Federation for Independent Business and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce telling Ms. Freeland in a May 9 letter that the change would "make Canada a less competitive and less innovative nation."

The Canadian Medical Association has

called the tax changes "detrimental" to doctors because it would cause a "retroactive increase in tax on the retirement savings of mid to late-career doctors" and deter new graduates considering community-based practice.

Ms. Freeland said the government takes Canada's health care "very seriously," saying it had made more than \$200 billion in investments, increased student loan forgiveness for rural doctors and nurses by 50 percent, and introduced dental care and pharamacare plans.

She said the capital gains tax increase would bring in revenues of roughly \$12 billion, which would be "a lot of additional revenue" for provinces and territories.

"I would invite Canadians who feel that our doctors should be paid more to suggest that provinces and territories should be using some of that revenue to increase the actual salaries, the rate of compensation for doctors," she said.

Some Conservative MPs have accused the Liberals of delaying the specific start date for the tax increase to June 25 in order to generate a pre-election tax revenue boost. They have argued that Canadians will rush to sell stocks, vacation homes, businesses and other equity ahead of the deadline.



# Ontario Premier Doug Ford announces cabinet reshuffle



Ontario Premier Doug Ford has unveiled major changes to his cabinet after meeting with ministers on Thursday, June 6th afternoon at Queen's Park.

Stephen Lecce has been moved out of his role as education minister into a new position as the minister of energy and electrification. Todd Smith, who was previously in charge of energy, is taking over education.

Several key ministers have remained in their portfolios, with Sylvia Jones staying on as minister of health, Peter Bethlenfalvy still finance minister and Paul Calandra in charge of municipal affairs and housing.

Steve Clark, who was the province's housing minister during the Greenbelt scandal and resigned at its height, has been made the government's house leader.

Some new names were also added to the cabinet, including Natalia Kusendova-Bashta in long-term care and Mike Harris in red tape reduction.

Announcing the reshuffle, Ford said the changes come with a focus on economic growth.

"As our province and economy continue to grow, this is the team that is working side-by-side with workers, businesses, labour

partners, Indigenous leaders and every member of Team Ontario to rebuild our economy," Ford said in a statement.

"We're at an important moment in our province's history with clear choices. Our team is choosing growth and prosperity. We're choosing lower taxes and better jobs with bigger paycheques. Let's Get it Done!"

Ford's economic development minister will continue to be Vic Fedeli, who has focused particularly on securing deals with electric vehicle makers in Ontario.

Lecce, who is now in charge of the energy file, has had "electrification" added to his brief, with sources telling Global News the government is expected to pivot to focus on energy as it eyes a potential early election.

Speaking to reporters after the reshuffle, Lecce said he hoped to build energy capacity in the province, with a focus on economic growth.

"We will not do that by imposing higher taxes and a higher carbon tax," he said, leaning into the party's talking points in opposition to a federal price on carbon introduced after Ford scrapped cap-and-trade in Ontario.

"We have to have energy to do everything," he added. "That's the primary focus of the government going forward: building the energy supply to build our economy. We're going to deliver the largest infrastructure build in Canadian history."

Sam Oosterhoff has also been added to the cabinet as an associate minister responsible for "energy-intensive industries." Nolan Quinn is now an associate minister responsible for forestry.

A change to the former Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport means it will now be headed by Stan Cho as "Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, with responsibility for OLG."

While many senior cabinet ministers kept hold of their portfolios, Premier Ford made tweaks and changes across his front bench.

Ford added and shuffled a total of 16 ministers in his cabinet, while 21 ministers who were in cabinet on Thursday morning were still at the top table, either keeping their roles or seeing them amended by the premier.

The new cabinet means a total of 36 ministers will sit at Ontario's top table.



# False Pandemic Benefit Claims Could Be Billions Higher Than Thought, CRA Warns

The Canada Revenue Agency has raised concerns that false claims for pandemic benefits could be billions of dollars higher than initially thought.

“Overall the Agency estimates its verifications alone will exceed the dollar value of potentially ineligible benefits received by individuals by almost \$3.2 billion,” the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) wrote to the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee.

“That is 22 percent more coverage than the amount of potentially ineligible payments requiring further investigation identified by the auditor general.”

The rising costs detailed in CRA records did not include the growing expense of auditing taxpayers who claimed the \$2,000 monthly Canada Emergency Response Benefit cheques.

Only \$1.93 billion of pandemic benefits given to ineligible Canadians has been recovered to date, as reported by Blacklock’s Reporter. The amount of ineligible claims has cost each Canadian taxpayer at least \$7.96.

Another \$250 million was falsely claimed by Employment Insurance claimants through the Department of Employment. To date, just \$133.9 million has been recovered.

The CRA told the committee that the cost of auditing to retrieve the funds was high. It said further work is planned to continue until 2025, with a projected overall cost of \$707 million.

“The Revenue Agency is sensitive



to the hardship Canadians may still be facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic,” the agency wrote. “Payment arrangements have been expanded to allow the repayment of debt over a longer period of time. This approach takes into account the individual financial circumstances of the person.”

Auditor General Karen Hogan said in a 2022 report that Canada Emergency Response Benefit confirmed only cursory checks were made on applicants claiming benefits intended for jobless taxpayers facing eviction or foreclosure. “As the pandemic continued to evolve the post-payment verifications were delayed,” Hogan told reporters at the time.

When asked how much of the overpayments were the result of “good faith mistakes by Canadians” versus fraud, Ms. Hogan said “I can’t give you an answer.”

The CRA disclosed in 2021 it had been flooded with tips on suspected

cheats. “This past year, the National Leads Centre processed over 60,000 leads with the increase being attributable to COVID-19 benefits,” said a report. The report found that while the typical report volume was 30,000 annually, informants sent in so many tips that the CRA reassigned staff to manage the paperwork.

Within days of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Parliament passed the Canada Emergency Response Benefits Act. No upfront proof of eligibility was required. The program, which was originally budgeted at \$24 billion, instead ended up costing \$81.6 billion.

The CRA announced in March 2024 it had fired more than 200 employees for falsely claiming a federal income benefit during the pandemic. The employees must repay the CERB funds they received if they have not already done so.





# Cameroon or Canada? Poorly paid doctors and nurses are choosing to leave.

## That's common in Africa



**D**AKAR, Senegal (AP) — After training as a nurse, Nevielle Leinyuy spent almost a decade in Cameroon working as a front desk receptionist because he was unable to find a decent paying job in the medical field. Last year, he gave up looking. He applied for a nursing program in Canada, where he now lives with his wife and children.

“They are stealing us from Cameroon,” the 39-year-old Leinyuy said. “We want to work in Cameroon but there is no pay, so we have to look for other options.”

Cameroon has one of the world’s lowest ratios of health workers per capita. About a third of trained doctors who graduated from medical school last year left the country, the minister of higher education, Jacques Fame Ndong, has said.

Many doctors and nurses are leaving the West African nation for more lucrative jobs in Europe and North America. Canada, like Cameroon, has official languages of English and French.

Leinyuy said he would have earned 60,000 CFA francs, or less than \$100 a month, working as a nurse in Cameroon.

“Just imagine what a family of a father with three kids and a wife would do with that,” he said. “The rent of my house alone was 40,000 francs (\$66).”

Cameroon is not the only sub-Saharan African country where low salaries are driving health workers to leave.

While the number of health workers increased after the COVID pandemic in several countries, almost 75% of African nations still experience medical staff shortages and high rates of healthcare professionals leaving to work abroad, according to a 2023 report from the World Health Organization.

The lack of health workers makes it increasingly difficult to tackle infant

mortality and infectious diseases and provide essential services like vaccinations, the WHO regional director for Africa, Matshidiso Moeti, has said.

Cameroon has fewer than seven nurses per 10,000 inhabitants, according to the latest WHO data. Neighboring Nigeria has more than double that ratio, and Canada has more than 14-fold.

Marie-Pier Burelle, a spokesperson for Health Canada, said that Canada is facing its own health workforce shortages. Over 30,000 nursing positions in the country are vacant, according to Statistics Canada.

Burelle said Canada follows the WHO’s code of practice to ensure that its recruitment of workers internationally is ethical. Ethical recruitment includes strengthening the health systems of developing countries dealing with medical personnel shortages, according to the WHO’s code of practice.

Late last year, the Canadian government donated around \$2.2 million to Cameroon’s health ministry and delivered medical and monitoring equipment as part of Canada’s Global Initiative for Vaccine Equity.

But such investment falls far short of needs. Cameroon’s government employs around 100 doctors each year, for a population of around 28 million people, said Dr. Peter Louis Ndifor, the vice president of the Cameroon Medical Council, a doctors association. He said the numbers are even lower in the private sector.

By comparison, the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, with a population of under a million people, recruited around 155 doctors last year, according to provincial health authorities.

As the director of a private medical clinic, Ndifor said he experienced the problem of health workers leaving Cameroon firsthand. “Personally, I will

not hold back any young person who thinks that their future is traveling abroad,” Ndifor said. “But when a young doctor that you’ve supervised for three to five years and given responsibility to leaves, it becomes a major setback.”

The shortage of health workers is just part of Cameroon’s current health crisis.

More than 210 health facilities are no longer functional because of destruction or abandonment by health personnel during a separatist conflict in the country’s west, according to the United Nations. The conflict has killed thousands of people over the past several years.

Cameroon’s health ministry did not respond to questions about the high number of health workers leaving the country.

Tumenta Kennedy, a Cameroon-based migration consultant, said Canada has become an attractive destination because Canadian agencies specifically target local doctors and nurses. Family ties overseas also play a role. Canadian government immigration programs like the Federal Skilled Worker Program or Express Entry are increasingly active. Cameroonians are among the top nationalities applying for Express Entry, according to the program’s latest report.

Overall in 2022, more than 1,800 new permanent residents came to Canada to work as registered nurses from other nations.

Inès Kingue, 30, a medical lab technician from Douala, is hoping to join them. Despite holding two masters degrees in virology and microbiology, she has been working as an intern without a contract for the past four years, earning less than \$200 a month. She heard about training opportunities in Canada from a colleague.

“When Canada opened its doors, I put all my focus into trying to go there,” Kingue said.



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## SHN ZOO DAY Raises \$625,000 to Support Equitable Healthcare in Scarborough

The Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation is thrilled to announce the tremendous success of its second annual SHN ZOO DAY: A Walk in the Wild, held on Sunday, June 9, at the Toronto Zoo. Despite the rain, the event drew an enthusiastic crowd of more than 1,600 participants and raised \$625,000 through online donations and contributions collected during the event. And more donations are still coming in to support the vital healthcare services at SHN's Birchmount, Centenary, and General hospitals.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who joined us and contributed to shaping a future of exceptional healthcare for Scarborough. For too long, our incredible healthcare teams have done more than anyone thought possible with less than anyone could imagine. Now, imagine what we can do with more. The funds raised will directly impact our ability to modernize facilities and introduce innovative healthcare services, ensuring that our community receives the best care possible," said Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation.

This unique event, presented by Scotiabank, featured a walk through the zoo and culminated in the Love, Scarborough Festival, presented by Alphawave Semi, at the Savanna Picnic Site. Hosted by CP24's Kayla-Marie Williams, the festival showcased an array of cultural performances, delicious food, unique animal encounters, and family-friendly activities, creating a vibrant atmosphere for attendees.

Janine Johnson, a grateful patient reflected on her experience, "During the pandemic, I went into SHN's General Hospital for surgery without anyone by my side. It was scary, but the staff made me feel comfortable and supported. SHN ZOO DAY is a chance to give back to the hospitals that have given so much to my family."

This event, SHN's biggest fundraiser of the year, is crucial for advancing healthcare services, including the groundbreaking doctor-at-the-door emergency department at Centenary Hospital and the brand new Northpine Diagnostic Imaging department opening later this year at Scarborough General Hospital.

Donations can be made until the end of June at [shnzooday.ca](http://shnzooday.ca)







# HEALTH & WELLNESS



## About the Love, Scarborough Campaign

The Love, Scarborough campaign was launched by Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation in 2022 to raise awareness and donations for Scarborough hospitals. Funds raised support critical projects across the health network, including expanding emergency care, establishing new models of care in the Scarborough community, and advancing medical research and education. SHN does more than anyone thought possible with less than anyone could imagine. Imagine what they could do with more. Learn more at [lovescarborough.ca](https://lovescarborough.ca)

## About Scarborough Health Network

Across three hospitals and eight satellite sites, Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is shaping the future of care. Their many programs and services are designed around the needs of one of Canada's most vibrant and diverse communities. They are home to North America's largest nephrology program, as well as the designated cardiac care and spine centre for Scarborough and surrounding communities to the east. SHN is proud to be a community-affiliated teaching site for the University of Toronto and partner with a number of other universities and colleges, helping to train the next generation of healthcare professionals. Learn more at [shn.ca](https://shn.ca)

## About the Toronto Zoo

The Toronto Zoo's mission is to connect people, animals and conservation science to fight extinction and our vision is a world where wildlife and wild spaces thrive.

An iconic tourist attraction and Conservation organization, the Toronto Zoo boasts a number of leading programs for helping wildlife and their natural habitats – from species reintroduction to reproductive research. A world-class educational centre for people of all ages, the Toronto Zoo is open every day including December 25 and attracts approximately 1.2 million guests each year.

Toronto Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The Zoo has also achieved the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) Certificate of Good Animal Practice® and is inspected by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).







# Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation has 87,000 reasons to smile, thanks to the 2024 Tim Hortons Smile Cookie campaign



L-R: The von Engelbrechten Family with the Tim Hortons Markham & Stouffville restaurant owners and team members and Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation

Tim Hortons Markham and Stouffville restaurant owners unveiled the total proceeds of this year's Smile Cookie campaign. An incredible \$87,832.03 was raised for Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH).

From April 29 to May 5, customers purchased Smile Cookies (\$1.50 plus tax each) and Smile Cookie products with 100 per cent of the proceeds benefiting local charities across Canada. The Smile Cookie program started in 1996 and over 20 years later, proceeds from each Smile Cookie are still donated to charities from coast-to-coast-to-coast, supporting the communities in



Some of the Markham and Stouffville Restaurant Owners and Leadership: Ivan Chiu, Gillian Fintleman, Gulfam Khan, Subash Suntharesan, Jeff Thompson and Michael Forbes

which the restaurants operate. The funds raised from participating restaurants in Markham and Stouffville benefit families and children cared for at MSH.

Two-year-old Brooks von Engelbrechten, accompanied by his parents Tyler and Marina, joined the announcement to share their appreciation to the Tim Hortons Markham and Stouffville restaurant owners and staff.

"Brooks had recently undergone ear tube surgery at the hospital and his entire health care team went above and beyond to ensure he was well cared for, while providing us first-time parents the compassion we needed

to put us at ease," shares Tyler. "Knowing that the hospital relies on generous community support and seeing that companies like Tim Hortons are committed to giving back so that families like ours can access exceptional care in our community really means so much."

Today, health care's complex landscape is changing, along with our growing, diverse community. With a renewed focus on the MSH of tomorrow, our community

hospital continues to deliver integrated care for healthier communities. Through dynamic partnerships and collaborations coupled with the purposeful adoption of technology, MSH will increase access and streamline services – made possible by community support. Government funding can't cover the cost of all critical life-saving equipment and top priority needs. Generous donor support is essential to the exceptional care that MSH patients receive close to home.

Last month, to kick off the Smile Cookie launch, restaurant owners of Markham and Stouffville gathered at the hospital to announce a \$500,000 commitment to the hospital. In recognition of Tim Hortons' generosity, MSH will proudly name a paediatric surgical waiting room in its honour.

"We are very grateful and proud to be the

long-standing beneficiary of the annual Smile Cookie campaign in Markham and Stouffville," says Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation. "Tim Hortons' commitment to making a difference in the lives of children in our community, and the tremendous support from the restaurant owners and their teams, will ensure we are able to meet the needs of our vibrant, growing community for generations to come."

To learn more about the Smile Cookie campaign, visit [www.timhortons.ca/smile-cookie](http://www.timhortons.ca/smile-cookie) or to join Tim Hortons Markham and

Stouffville Restaurant Owners and their commitment to our hospital, donate now at [mshf.on.ca](http://mshf.on.ca).

**Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation** exists to enable the growth of Markham Stouffville Hospital by raising funds and awareness for its ongoing priorities and needs. Donations from the community fund life-saving medical equipment that helps to ensure the delivery of first-class health care at MSH.

**About Tim Hortons**, In 1964, the first Tim Hortons® restaurant in Hamilton, Ontario opened its doors and Canadians have been ordering Tim Hortons iconic Original Blend



Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation present the Tim Hortons Markham & Stouffville Restaurant Owners and team with a gift of appreciation for their long-standing support

coffee, Double-Double™ coffees, Donuts and Timbits® in the years since. Over the last 55 years, Tim Hortons has captured the hearts and taste buds of Canadians and has become synonymous with serving Canada's favourite coffee. Tim Hortons is Canada's largest restaurant chain operating in the quick service industry with nearly 4,000 restaurants across the country. More than a coffee and bake shop, Tim Hortons is part of the Canadian fabric and guests can enjoy hot and cold specialty beverages – including



Two-year-old Brooks von Engelbrechten (centre), accompanied by his parents Marina and Tyler express their thanks to Tim Hortons as a grateful patient family of Markham Stouffville Hospital lattes, cappuccinos and espressos, teas and our famous Iced Capp® – alongside delicious breakfast, sandwiches, wraps, soups and more. Tim Hortons has more than 5,100 restaurants in Canada, the United States and around the world.





# Shoppers Drug Mart and Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation join forces to empower women's mental wellness and advocacy through annual run

Over 2,000 community supporters participated in the annual Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women Markham in support of Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH). The longstanding partnership between Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health and MSH Foundation has raised \$430,000 to date. These funds will continue to enable Women's Wellness programs for the Gulshan & Pyarali G. Nanji Mental Health Services at the hospital.

The Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women is the largest event series in Canada dedicated to women's mental health. Women continue to disproportionately experience impacts to their mental health compared to men, and MSH Foundation and Shoppers Drug Mart aim to help by bringing communities together to support local women's programs.

"Tremendous community partnerships and generous support is essential for Markham Stouffville Hospital to be able to remain on the cutting-edge of patient care," says Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation.



Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation, Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation and Nimi Nanji Simard, The Nanji Family Foundation

"Every dollar raised helps our expert team deliver and expand programs that provide women with the unique support they need. We are so grateful for the partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart for making this possible."

The support provided to MSH from the Run for Women Markham over the past nine years has helped shape the hospital's Women's Wellness services, which include Art Therapy Group, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Group, Interpersonal Psychotherapy Group and a support group for women who have been identified with, or are at risk of postpartum depression. These programs are open to all existing patients of Oak Valley Health through referral.

"Every year the need for mental health services is growing," says Teresa Givelas, Patient Care Manager, Outpatient Mental Health, Oak Valley Health. "The Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women, and all who make this event possible, are helping us change the landscape of mental health



Shoppers Drug Mart presents a cheque of \$430,000 to Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation from the proceeds of the 2024 Run for Women Markham. L-R: Michelle Beard, Shoppers Drug Mart District Manager for Operations GTA North, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham, Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation, Mandeep Singh, Shoppers Drug Mart Associate Owner, Jason Lo, Shoppers Drug Mart District Manager for GTA North, Nadejda (Nadya) Ninos, Shoppers Drug Mart Associate Owner, Craig McOuat, Board Chair, MSH Foundation, Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation and Courtney Sorger, Chief Community Engagement Officer and Executive Lead, Corporate Strategy, Oak Valley Health

care for the women in our community, throughout every stage of their lives. Our

Nanji Family Foundation. Donate online at [www.runforwomen.ca/Markham](http://www.runforwomen.ca/Markham) \*up to \$50,000

### Markham Stouffville Hospital

Foundation exists to enable the growth of Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) by raising funds and awareness for its ongoing priorities and needs. Donations from the community fund life-saving medical equipment that helps to ensure the delivery of first-class health care at MSH.

### About the Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women:

The Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women brings communities together in support of local women's mental health programs to make communities healthier. Run for Women is a 5K Run/Walk, and 10K Run taking place in 18 cities across Canada. Since 2012, over 195,000 participants have helped raise approximately \$20 million for women's mental health programs across Canada.



Teresa Givelas, Patient Care Manager Outpatient Mental Health, Oak Valley Health (second last to the right) with members of the Mental Health Team and Women's Wellness Program at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital

teams rely on donor support to continue to provide exceptional mental health care and access to programs dedicated to women's wellness."

As the government can't fund all of the hospital's top priority needs, dynamic partnerships coupled with community investment will enable the hospital to meet the needs of our growing, aging, and diverse community.

There is still time to support women's mental health in the community. Until July 1, 2024, donations made towards the Markham run will make double the impact\* thanks to generous long-time MSH supporters, The



2024 Run for Women Markham start line





# JUNO – 6th OF JUNE, A DAY TO REMEMBER, HONOR, BE THANKFUL, FOR CELEBRATIONS, AND PRAYERS

By: Kane Siva

Ladies & Gentleman, I am sure most of us were not born on this day, of the 24 hours that changed the world, where greatest sacrifices were ever made on this planet, for Love, Pasion, Vision, Valor Honor, Bravery, Countries Resources Bankrupted, Families Torn Apart, Lives Obliterated, and for a day, that is always remembered, as the “D- DAY Landing on The Beaches Of Normandy in1944, for 80 years and counting, on the coast of Northern France”, and for Canadians known as JUNO. For Canadians this was their Longest Day, an Epic Day to remember and, even now celebrated all across Canada with utmost fervor, for the sacrifices made by more than 15,000 Canadians from all walks of life, as they simply extolled the values of living in a free world, with pluralistic democratic principles, and a way of life so that future generations will be free to make brighter, and better choices in their lives.

As the World Celebrates the lives lost, the greatest sacrifices made, I felt in my heart, a compelling urge and duty, to honor these heroes for their patriotic valor, and love they

Time Magazine USA, as “The 24 Hours That Saved The World”.

In these 24 hours, the participation of the Canadian armed forces at the Juno, was the moment that elevated the role of the Canadian forces, and Canada for their invaluable contribution to root out the evil forces of hate, and anarchy.

In the dark of the night, a trove of Allied aircrafts took to the night skies from hastily constructed air strips, runways, and aerodromes. The Allied planes flew more than 14000 sorties on D -Day. The Royal Air Force led the action followed by Royal Canadian Air Force-RCAF, and US Air Force planes hit the beaches of Normandy in a devastating effect to silence the well trained powerful German guns.

Our Canadian airmen, and the Naval personnel were the first, who sprang into action. The commanders of the invading forces, assigned the 3rd Cadian Infantry Division, commanded by Major-General RFL. Keller and 2nd Canadian Armored Brigade to take part in the Seaborne assault. Canada’s 3rd



to destroy the impregnable wall of defense erected by Erwin Rommel & the German soldiers with pinpoint accuracy and great success. Major John Howard used the “Silent Planes” - The Gliders to achieve some of the most impossible missions on the D -Day. The Gliders, and its pilots were exposed to open danger from German fighter pilots and snipers, and were called as, “Flying Coffins”. The Glider pilots were more in mortal danger than the Air borne aircraft fighter pilots, but they carried on in spite of all the dangers, and these unsung heroes gave a clear edge for the Normandy landings, and the following liberation of the beaches, and secured a vast area of control from the Germans.

The stories of the D-Day, Landings On The Normandy Beaches, and WW 11 have been written and are still being written in more than thousands of Books, Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, and on online postings, and in other mediums. But as a



had for Canada, and humanity as a whole. Most of them never asked any questions, volunteered, and willingly participated on this day, of Infamy, you may call it, The D-Day Assault, was Code named “Operation Overlord” by the Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenohver. We, who came to this country from different parts of the world as migrants could call, and Honor this Great Country as our home by all means, in leaps and bounds without any hesitation, because of the “Sacrificial Lambs” who could not make it back home, to the beloved arms of their kith and kin. We must be more thankful for all these brave men and women who played a major role in the air, sea or on the ground, so that we all should be able to live in peace and harmony one day.

I am more interested in all the 3 landing forces, but especially the role of the Royal Canadian Air Force personnels, the British, Americans, and their daredevil flying missions on D-Day and beyond.

The best description of D-DAY was by The

Division Brigades were the first to land in the first wave at the JUNO BEACH. Royal Canadian Air Force personnel were already on bombing missions in the war zone. As the action window approached, the Lancasters of the RCAF number 6, Bomber group, dropped thousands of tons of explosives on German defense forces on the coast of the Normandy beaches. The 2nd Tactical Air force of the RCAF played a vital role on the D DAY. Our brave fighter pilots took on the German Luftwaffe in dark clouded skies, which gave a great edge for the success of the D-Day mission in unfathomable terms, and gave a clear supremacy in the air. RCAF provided enough cover and support for all the Allied forces unequivocally throughout this mission, which ensured great success for the Allied mission led by Dwight Eisenohver. RCAF squadrons 441, 442, and 443 continued their participation that gave a tactical edge for the D-Day Landings. With the aerial bombing runs, a second wave of invading forces started



World War II Veteran  
Captain C.K. Pathy...





Royal Air Force - World War II Veteran Captain...

Proud Canadian I want to amplify what our famous Canadian Author, CBC TV, and Radio Talk show host, Ted Barris said in his writings, what he told the then President Clinton, on the 50th D-Day Landing celebrations. To quote his words, "Don't forget the Canadians". I explained



that, of the 5 D-Day beaches, two had been for British, two for Americans, and one Canadians—Juno, and this had been an extraordinary achievement for Canadians. He further states in his writings, The president acknowledged the enormous contributions of our Canadian forces and paid a handsome tribute at the 50th Normandy day celebrations in France.

At 0330 hours on the 6th of June 1944, the blue skies over England, France, and the beaches of Normandy were overcast with a vast array of allied fighter planes taking off from all parts of England and France



(via the Douglas Fisher Archive)  
A photograph of G/Capt John Cunningham taken towards the end of the war when he was serving as the Group Captain Fighter Ops at HQ No. 11 Group, Fighter Command.

in successive formation, and with only one intent, to win this war at any cost. The breakdown of the aircrafts were, around 3,500 heavy bombers, 5,000 fighter aircrafts, and 1700 medium bombers. Some pilots did two sorties, some 3 and in total almost 14,000 sorties. Another aircraft made a significant difference for the successful D-Day landings was American,

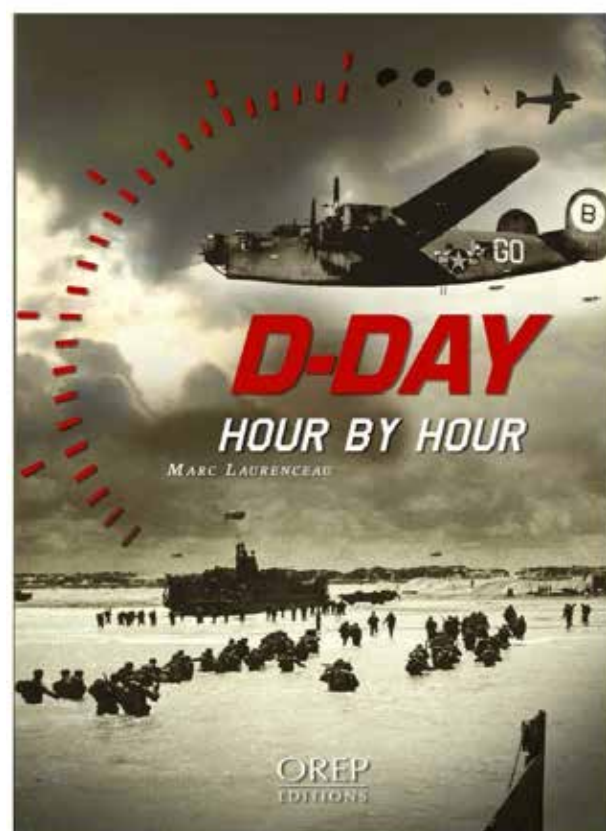
C 47 transport planes made by Douglas co, the DC-3s. It helped enormously in the transport of troops and heavy artillery and hardware for the D Day. It was said almost a total of 487, C-47 transport planes, Skytrain, and also known as Dakota that served as a workhorse for the Allies.

Of all the D-Day Landing Beaches, the Bloodiest Beach was the maha Beach, where 1,000s of American Soldiers were slaughtered as the allied commander's intelligence or strategy failed. It was a pathetic scene watching so many documentaries that were made on the D- Day landings. It was a real daring, harrowing, and unprecedented amphibious assault aimed at freeing Europe from Hitler's dominance. Omaha beach capture, played a crucial role for the allied forces since it gave greater access to major sea ports, particularly to Cherbourg, Manche,

in France. Folks, of all the battles that were fought after the 1940s, the bloodiest, boldest, daring, dominating war was, the D-Day on the beaches of Normandy, and the Air battle over France and England. There were so many stories related by the survivors, and it's breathtaking to read their harrowing, heartbreaking, brave, sad, passionate, and tearful tales of

survival.

It touches the innermost arteries and veins in our system. What a story and what a survival. To name a few; Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Captain Don James, AB Whitten of Seaman of Royal Canadian Naval reserve, RCAF Flying Officer Richard Rohmer, Lieutenant Don Kerr of Royal Canadian



Corps of Signals, George Cooper of the



Canadian soldiers in a Landing Craft As...

14th Field Regiment, Mark Lockyer, a paratrooper of D-Day. Kenneth Lett of RCAF 402 F-Squadron, pilot of the famous Spitfire, passed away in Victoria British Columbia, on the 15th of May 2024 at the age of 100 years. There are few veterans of Australia, Britain, France, and America still around.

I am humbled to say at least that I met two of the WW11 veterans, Capt. (Cats Eye), John Cunningham of the RAF on a delivery flight to Hong Kong at Katunayaka Airport in 1975 and has his autograph, and I am also blessed to have had worked almost 7 years with another D-Day pilot, and the first Sri Lankan Capt., who had flown in WW11 and also on D-Day, Capt. C.K. Pathy was known in the RAF, as Capt. PAT, who flew sorties for the RAF on Bristol Beau fighters aircraft. Proud to say he was born in my neighboring village Uduvil, Jaffna, and worked as a training Capt. for Air Ceylon after his hectic career with Air India, and JRD TATA.

As the world, and we in Canada celebrate and honor all these marvelous, wonderful, and unsung heroes of yesteryear, I join other Canadians and offer our prayers and heartfelt gratitude to all these brave Folks, whose service and sacrifices were more than Himalayan.

I want to Eulogize them with what Sir Winston Churchill coined for one of these celebrations, or on another note, when he was around, with little more additions and modifications of mine.

Quote "Never In The History Of Mankind So Much Had Been Done By So Few, To Many, So The Many, May Live In Peace And Harmony".

I want to Salute All the War time Newspaper reporters, cameramen, correspondents, dispatchers, Nurses, Doctors, paramedic, and also all the brave German soldiers who fought for their cause, and above all, all the beautiful flying machines, naval vessels, Battle tanks that brought this war to a close.

"You All Did Not Die in Vain After All, and Will Be Cherished In Our Memories Forever".

*Muchas Gracias Seniors.  
Bravo Amigos!*

**K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)**  
Former Flight Operations Officer,  
Air Ceylon Ltd.  
[Kanesiva6@gmail.com](mailto:Kanesiva6@gmail.com)

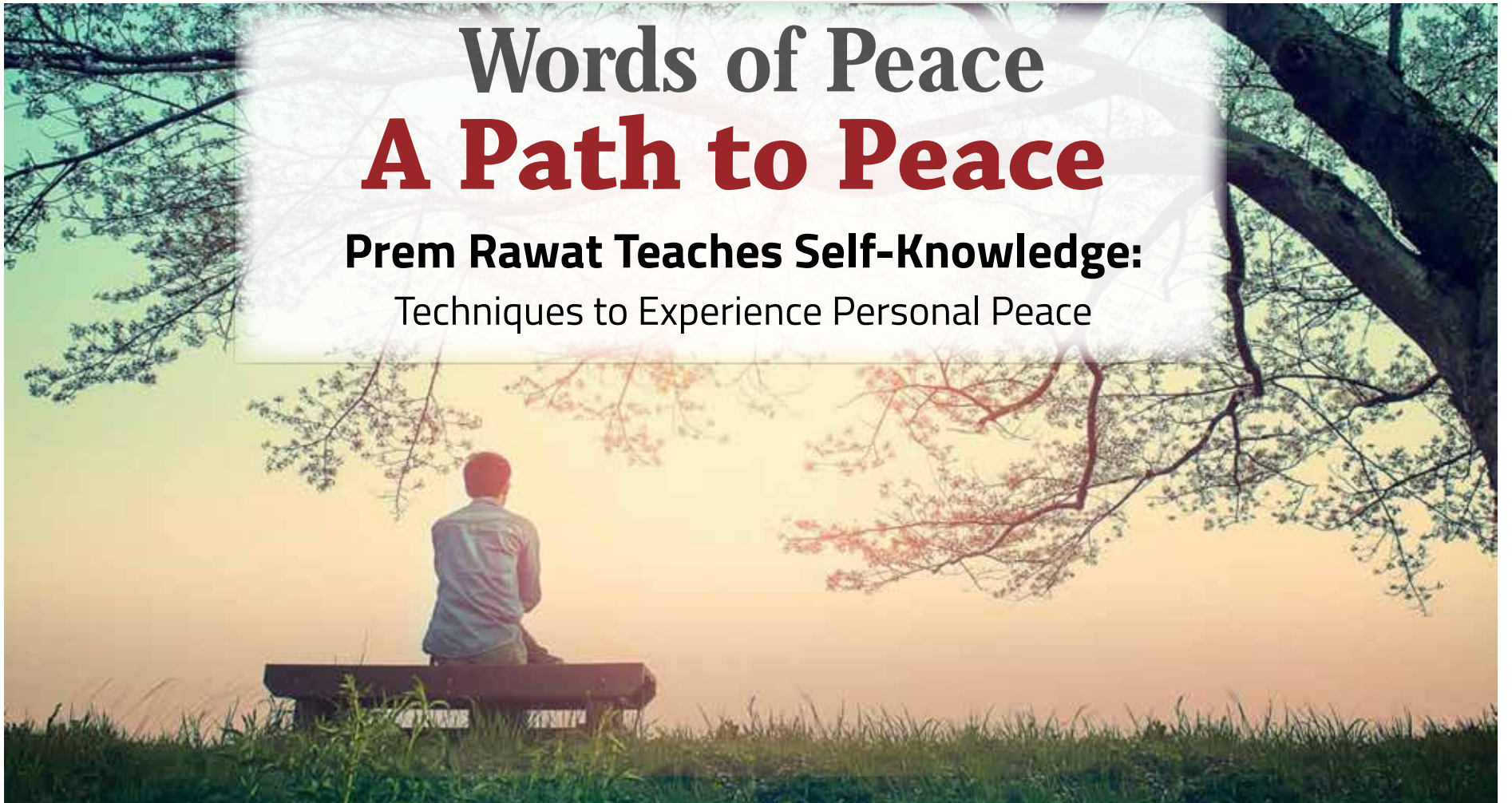




## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Words of Peace A Path to Peace

Prem Rawat Teaches Self-Knowledge:  
Techniques to Experience Personal Peace



Prem Rawat teaches a simple method to help turn your senses from the outside world to an inner experience of peace, an experience unique to each person. He offers guidance and practical tools he calls the “techniques of Self-Knowledge”, or just “Knowledge.” Practicing these empowering techniques daily helps you to better understand your true self, revealing an ever-evolving experience of heartfulness and contentment.

*“Gaining knowledge about the self is a process of discovery, of uncovering who we are.”*

Prem Rawat’s Peace Education and Knowledge (PEAK) course is a prerequisite to help you gain a solid foundational understanding about the value of personal peace. At the conclusion of this self-paced course, you can choose to request a workshop, called a Knowledge Session, to learn the techniques. There is no charge to participate in PEAK or the Knowledge Session.

The daily practice of the techniques becomes an individual endeavor, easy to enjoy on your own wherever you are. Prem Rawat’s role is to provide ongoing guidance, inspiration and insights via in-person events, video content, books and podcasts. He also regularly offers Knowledge Review sessions for people who have already learned the techniques and who want a refresher.

Hundreds of thousands of people across 100 countries practice the techniques of Knowledge every day, reporting profound benefits.

### Get Started with PEAK

Throughout this self-paced video course, Prem Rawat facilitates a journey of self-discovery. Rather than describing or defining personal peace, the course materials engage you to reach your own understanding.

The self-paced course aims to help you get in touch with your inner strength whether you opt to learn the techniques of Knowledge afterwards or not – the decision is all yours.

### Prem Rawat Introduces PEAK

“It’s not my place to tell people what they should or should not be; I’m here to offer reminders that we’re blessed by the miracle of existence, and to help point the way to inner peace.”

– Prem Rawat

**Each chapter of the PEAK course explores different topics, including:**

Who are you?; Clarity and beliefs; Choice; Understanding; Gratitude; Peace; Hope; Self-knowledge.

### What people say about Knowledge

Hundreds of thousands of people across 100 countries practice the techniques of Knowledge every day, reporting profound benefits. The experience is unique to each person, but common themes include feelings of well-being, gratitude, clarity and peace. Here is a selection of responses from people who were asked to briefly answer the question, “How has the practice of Knowledge changed your life for the better?”

– Patti Dallas

“Practicing Knowledge keeps me focused, enables me to deal with life’s little bumps and feel grateful for what I have and appreciate being alive.”

– Elaine Wilson

“Practicing knowledge is like having an inner tuning fork.”

– Joyce Gerber

“Knowledge allows me to feel and experience a deep sense of inner peace and satisfaction that is beyond my everyday thoughts, concerns and feelings.”

– Gilman Hanson

“The practice of self-Knowledge, for me, is deeply grounding and centering.”

– Janice Wilson

“Practicing Self-Knowledge daily helps me to be centered and calm, even under difficult circumstances.”

– Maribeth Raullerson

*“Since receiving Knowledge, I have found a place of stillness, serenity and security within myself to which I can go whenever I choose*





# On Love's Excellence



- medium.com

By: J A Rajah

The nectarine fluid, in which is steeped in the milk-white teeth of my lady of gentle speech, is like the delicious mixture of milk and honey. The intimate love between this artless damsel and me is very much like the natural union of body and soul. The sooner the image in the pupil of my eye vacates its place the better, because it is a place reserved for the fair brow of my chosen maid.

**“Varlthal uyiru annual ayilay saathal,  
Athatkku annal neengum idathu”.**

வாழ்தல் உயிர்க்கன்னள் ஆயிழை சாதல்  
அதற்கன்னள் நீங்கும் இடத்து

When she is with me, the bejeweled lady is my life, but in parting, she causes deathly pangs which affect me. Only when I forget the character of my charming lady of battling eyes, other pleasant recollections are possible; but

how can i ever expect to forget her at all? My lover's form is so subtle that she never leaves my eyes, nor is she hurt when I close my eyelids.

**Kannurlar Kathalaraka Kannum,  
Erluthem Karapparkku arinthu”.**

கண்ணுள்ளார் காத லவராகக் கண்ணும்  
எழுதேம் கரப்பாக்கு அறிந்து

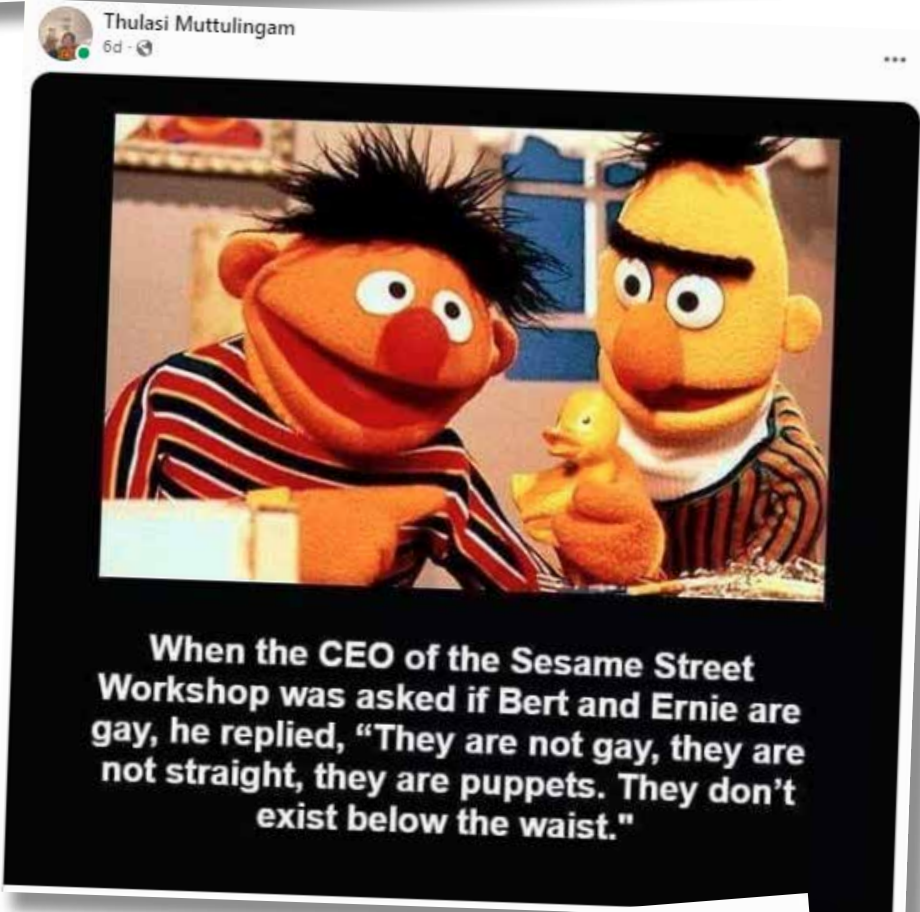
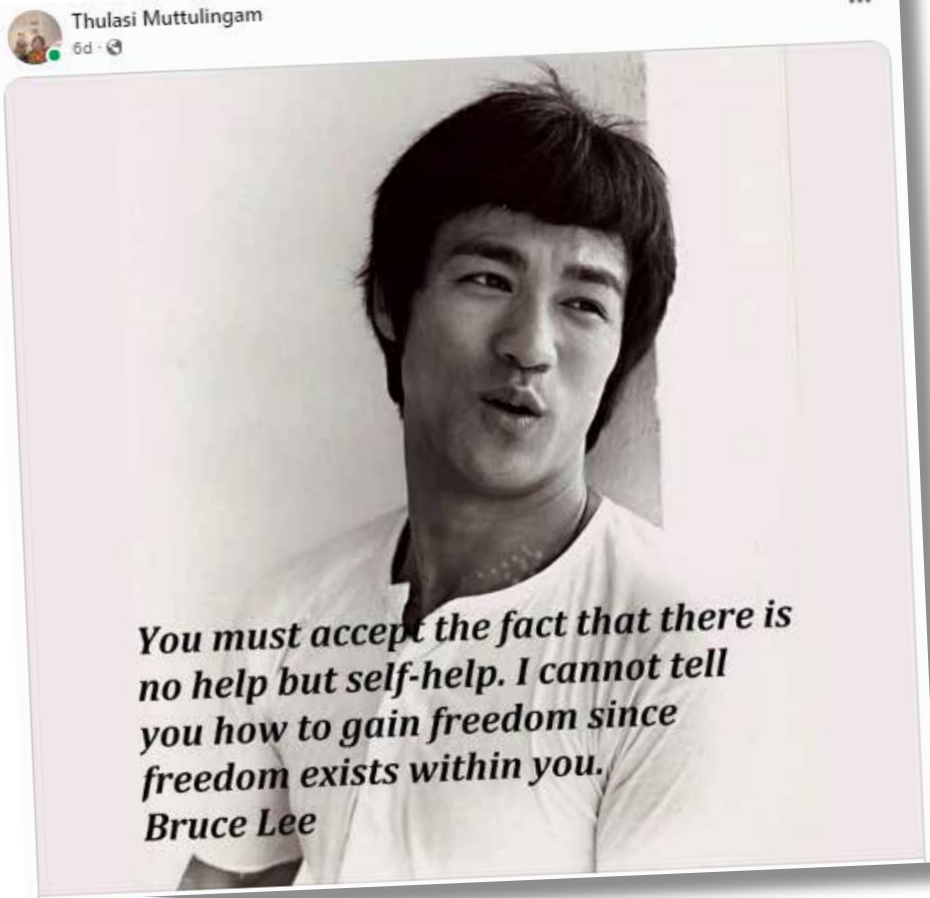
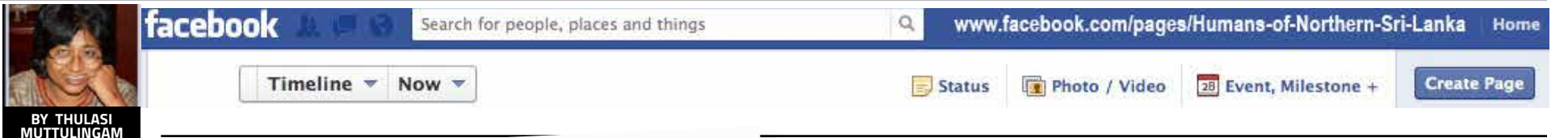
My lover always resides in my eyes, which I dare not paint, lest he vanishes during the process. As my beloved is ever in my heart, I fear to eat hot food, lest it burn him in there. For fear that my lover will vanish if I close my eyelids, I keep awake, and the village calls him a deserter. While my lover dwells happily in my heart and mind, the village would say that my estranged lover has deserted me.

**(Kural:1121-1130)**



Valluvar's Views





**Jekhan Aruliah**  
June 2 at 11:25 AM · 🌐

A team came to clear the building rubble from my Jaffna garden. The PHI (Public Health Inspector) gave me a telling off, via a translator, which I passed on to my contractor. I have been asking him for some months to clear the rubble. It took that red notice, giving me 3 days to comply, to help me goad him into action. I said he would be joining me in front of the Magistrate, though actually I would have been on my own. He is a good guy, and perhaps knew handcuffs would impede me signing cheques for his work.

That they came at all, after such a long wait, was miracle enough. Equally miraculous was their beautiful rust red tractor.

The driver said it is a 1965 British made Massey Ferguson. That makes it about the same age as me. Though aging and rusting, still a thing of beauty (I am talking about the tractor). With strength to easily pull away another tonne of concrete, steel and broken tiles. At least another decade or two of service in it, what with our skilled Jaffna tinkers to keep it throbbing away.







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## SPECIAL FEATURE



# Finding my ancestors through drumming on the streets of Toronto

By Kumary Chiquinquirá Ponnambalam

In my most solitude as a Tamil teenager living in a suburb, I would have never imagined joining a group like Mar Aberto- a band performing Maracatu de baque virado. Strong and beautiful, they were exciting, some of the queer and vibrant population of artists of downtown, Toronto. The group was a mix of punks, music geeks, djs, artists, and even scientists and a naturopath. They were some of the most intelligent people I knew, who delved deep into ancient cultures, like martial arts, and drumming. I had met a few of them at Lula Lounge, and found it exciting to be around a gang of people that liked music and hanging out on the streets like me.

I am a lot like them. We grew up in an almost civilized arts community of Toronto. We like to bike, and walk, and be environmentally conscious- avoiding brand names. We say please and thank you for everything and are extra nice, often because no one is getting paid or earning an income out of the arts, unless it's difficult, a sacrifice of benefits and space, and community that is often struggling from mental health issues, that I would argue comes from being under appreciated, and undervalued. But, we don't have a lot of pressure sometimes, and we want to be great but not too brilliant, like a child prodigy that has to give up their whole life to be amazing. So, we appreciate the government funding for community arts, from arts councils, and sell ticketed shows or parties sometimes. I know nothing about these artists except for a couple of years I spent drumming with them, but they are the ultimate crew. Imagining life without them turned into a depression, after I encountered more from them than I could handle at the time.

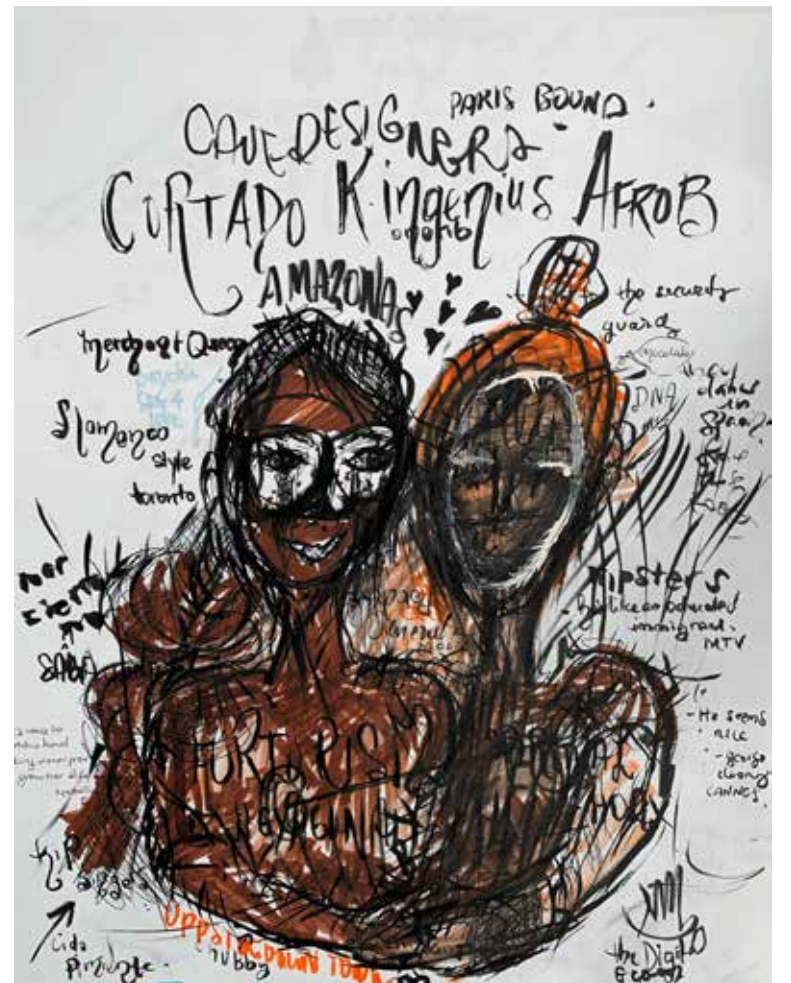
As we all have seen, our cities are transforming into zero emission spaces. Living a walking and biking life exposes us to the traumas of the street, including homelessness, poverty, substance use, sex work, the migration crisis and informal markets. This activity is often due to the mental health issues, systemic barriers, unemployment, world politics and community issues that street artists have to deal with. As a street artist, we also work to create peaceful, harmonious spaces and community. We also have to perform, manage the band, audience, venues, travel, and take care of the

equipment. The streets are our source of inspiration, and often our darkness. It can be unsafe and extremely difficult. Poverty makes it more difficult.

My first love isn't ancient drumming or street life, it is dance. Growing up in a suburban Kitchener-Waterloo neighbourhood, we didn't have many community arts, and none that spoke to me like dancing to Maracatu. Maracatu de baque virado is a style of street drumming from Northern Brazil. Several neighborhoods form their own Maracatu, in different styles that are replicated around the world in community groups. It is a spiritual marching carnival. The society that surrounds the culture in Toronto is weird, multicultural- an older Gen X crowd, and mixed with the newer migrations of gentrification, millennials and adult newcomers. I came to know this group of musicians through seeking the best dance parties, performing quite well, and practicing a lot.

Maracatu de baque virado is also attractive because it's easy to join. We practice twice a week. The music has a heavy bass like the great electronic music of Tamil movies, and Latin grooves, and African party scenes. There are five instruments, and each instrument can be played with basic instructions and practice, using simple rhythms. Anybody can play, which is the most important. It sounds good with just a few months of practice.

The words to Maracatu de baque virado songs are call and response. They are often about deities or being a strong nation. The rhythms are lineages of people from Portuguese the slave trade, and lead to royal families and kingdoms of East Africa. Maracatu is a mixture of slave culture with colonial, and indigenous. For me, it is the perfect way of saying, "together we are stronger". I also feel it is a revolution to take something that is so ordinary, like making sounds on metal and wood, and making it into a marching band, that brings together people, and teaches them how to listen to one another and work as a team. Especially in late-stage capitalism, a team player is hard to come by, and Maracatu provides the practice of engagement with peers, and productivity.



(kumacp.com)

Amazonians 2019, Mixed Media.

But through drumming, I also felt disconnected from my ancestry, if I did not respect the tradition. The basic rhythms brought us together and brought us to life, our feet, and others to their feet. And, that came with a responsibility. The responsibility of keeping this lineage alive, and creating a space that was safe for everyone, including those coming from diverse cultures. That included acknowledging the spirituality of the practice, the rituals and ancient gods that are a part of this practice. And even, the idea that we were creating a space for some people to worship, and heal from colonial trauma in their own roots and heritage. For another example, here in Canada, indigenous drums are used to connect to ancestors and heal the community. This is a practice that takes millennia to establish and is being erased by our different ways of life, but is still essential for the community to feel connected.

As a result, I wonder, in our life cycle, will we be able to keep these 1000-year-old rituals alive, or are we going to succumb to modern life and miss out on ancient wisdoms and cultures, and histories? As Canadians, should we learn about our own histories, or the one that is taught in the classroom that is mostly a European story? Should we keep these rituals alive, or just keep these rituals frozen in time and not evolved to the next generations? I think that we better pay cultural curators, artists and promoters better so they can entertain us, and provide their services to society. We need to learn from history how to create tapestries of our communities, and make spaces for learning about culture safe, inclusive and inspiring for everybody.

By Kumary Chiquinquirá Ponnambalam

Tamil-Venezuelan Canadian Artist,  
Urban guide, and Urban explorer



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# International Women's Day and Thirukkural



By: Kumar Punithavel

The earliest reported Women's Day observance, was called "National Women's Day", and was held on February 28th 1909, in New York City, organized by the Socialist Party of America. There have been claims that the day was commemorating a protest by women garment workers in New York on March 8th 1857. However, this statement is very much challenged.

In 1911, Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland were the first to celebrate the international women's day on March 11th. More than a million people attended rallies focused on suffrage, representation in education and women's rights. After much stumbling starts, the United Nations began celebrating Women's Day in 1975, which had been proclaimed the International Women's Year. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8th, as an official UN holiday commemorating women's rights and world peace.

It is appropriate to see what the Thirukkural, great Tamil book of moral living authored about two thousand years ago had to say about the rightful place of women in the society. Such an analysis will give an insight of the social structure of the Tamilian race during that time.

A person starts life and grows up to a matured person to face the world. It is the period one learns the trade to make a living and in the case of females they learn the art of managing the future home. When reaching adolescence, the two join together and become interdependent, when men venture to earn the wealth while women manage the home. This was the norm all over the world. The two world wars did make a profound impact in the lifestyle of humans around the world. As men went for war women had to get involved in the production of their country.

Thiruvalluvar had been clear in classifying the social structure into two. The book has three sections namely, Virtue, Wealth, and Love. It is the foundation of Virtue, on which the other two are built. Next the wealth is earned to enjoy the pleasure of love. In the section of wealth in no uncertain terms he had declared that all beings are equal at birth, be it race, creed, cast or gender should fragment humanity. The variation happens

depending on work they do for a living. In no uncertain terms he says at birth men and women are same and equal, variation begins with the work they perform. Here is that couplet 972;

பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா  
செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான்

All beings are the same in birth,  
But work decides their varied worth.

972

Hence in no uncertain terms in Tamilian society in those days men and women were treated as equals. That said in the first section on virtue in couplet #54., he goes on to ask an interesting question as to what is the greatest fortune for a man to have than a chaste woman. It is not gold, diamond, or wealth which he goes out to earn, but for the man it is the chaste woman who stays at home will be a boon. All other wealth will be of no avail. Here is that couplet;

பெண்ணின் பெருந்தக்க யாவள கற்பென்னும்  
திண்மை உண் டாகப் பெறின?

What greater fortune is for men,  
Than a constant chaste woman?

54.

Thus, the men in the Tamilian society considered women as of immense value. Having raised the question as to whether there is anything better in the first section virtue, in the second section wealth he compares the men and women and says in couplet 907 that a woman is more esteemed than men in couplet #907. Here is that couplet;

பெண்ணேவல் செய்தொழுகும் ஆண்மையின்  
நானுடைப்

பெண்ணே பெருமை உடைத்து

Esteemed more is women bashful  
Than man servile unto her will.

The Tamilian society two thousand years ago considered a shy servile woman more esteemed despite the submissive countenance. Essentially not to be carried away by her appearance, but she is strong willed, which he observes in the third section on love. In its couplet #1137, he observes a woman who can bear up her pain and keep her chin up is the greatest. There is no one better than her. One should notice it is the responsibility of

the woman to take care of the house is of primary concern.

I guess I should set a small backdrop to Tamilian society two thousand years ago. When a boy likes and loves a dame, and if the girls refuse his pursuits or if the parents refuse their relationship, the frustrated boy in order to get the sympathy and consent from his lover or parents and his relatives will take a Madal "மடல்" ride. Madal is an artificially made horse from Palmyra palm leaves. Palmyra horse or "மடல்" is a torture expressive of the burning passion of the lover to the beloved. The lover's body is laid on a tough pricking palmyra bed and he is carried along the street with songs of love pangs. The dame or parents of the lovers first may reproach them but finally consent to the marriage. Invariably the dame, despite all the hurt and sadness, never tries riding on 'Madal' tactics. Thus, Thiruvalluvar observes her self control is the greatest, and surpasses that of men.

கடலன்ன காமம் உழந்தும் மடலேறாப்  
பெண்ணிற் பெருந்தக்க தில்

Her sealike-lust seeks no Madal,

Nothing greater than serene is woman's  
self-control. 1137

The obvious question not only me but also you the male readers too could have is cannot men achieve such greatness. I glanced through Thirukkural's 1330 couplets, and noticed on the second section wealth in the chapter 98 titled 'Greatness', he had written a couplet suggesting if a man wants greatness like a chaste woman who is singularly focused, he too should lead a life of veracity like her. Here is that couplet # 974;

ஒருமை மகளிரே போலப் பெருமையும்  
தன்னைத்தான் கொண்டொழுகின் உண்டு  
Like chaste women, greatness too,  
Exists while guarded by self-veracity.

In conclusion we may say though women may be more apt to do nurturing, they are as great as or even greater than men in serving this world. Let us all celebrate Women's Day this March 8th 2024, and try to make them get equal rights and equal opportunities.





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Immigration and the trend towards a World Without Borders

By: J A Rajah

### A. The Need for Immigration:

The world is quickly becoming borderless. Immigration on a large scale has led people born in one country to move out to another country for more safe and comfortable living. Most people live and die in the nation they were born in. Only around one in 30 migrate to another country. Some migrate to escape war and internal conflicts. The United Nations in 2020 estimated that 281 million people were living in a country where they have not been three times the number estimated in 1970. Many nations are facing a dramatic increase in migration, -both legal and illegal-generating cultural shifts and political conflicts while straining governments and their economies. The world is rapidly becoming borderless, with large-scale immigration leading people born in one country to move to another for a safer and more comfortable life. However, the majority of people still live and die in the nation they were born in, with only about one in thirty migrating to another country. Some people migrate to flee from war and internal conflicts. The United Nations estimated in 2020 that 281 million people were living in a country where they were not born, three times the number estimated in 1970. This increase in migration, both legal and illegal, has resulted in cultural shifts and political conflicts, straining governments and their economies in many nations.

### B. Causes for Immigration:

Migration to foreign countries is caused by varied reasons. Many moved out of Sri Lanka for ethnic reasons. The conflict between the majority community and the minority community led to Tamils migrating to other countries for a secure living. They went to neighboring India, Canada, Swiss, Denmark, Norway and the U.K. Australia, South America, and North America were peoples mainly by immigrants migrating to these areas from densely populated areas of the world. South America is called Latin America owing to the predominant settlement of Spanish people there. North America was referred to as Anglo-America because of people from the U.K. settling down there in large numbers. The US has to face the load of a large number of



- nbcnews.com

refugees through Mexico from South America. The United States had some 10.2 million illegal immigrants in 2020 and another 10 million have entered recently. Similar immigration problems exist in Europe too. Along with genuine immigrants, well-established criminal gangs, largely run by second-generation immigrants are no longer just killing each other but increasingly relatives and innocent bystanders. Many perpetrators are children as young as 14 who are groomed by gangs to carry out hits. In Sweden, deaths by assault with a firearm now occur at a higher rate than Croatia's. Immigration has been exploited by criminal gangs to disestablish modern society.

### C. Refugee Camps:

The United Nations reported in October 2023 that more than 114 million people had been displaced from their homes by such violence. Conflict in Myanmar has led to one of the largest refugee camps in the world Kutuplong-Baluahli camp in Bangladesh., housing more than 700,000 refugees fleeing persecution in their homeland. Some leave their homelands desperately seeking a future for their families and an escape from the poverty of their brown nations, often ruled by governments that waste their people's wealth on delusional economic models., or by corrupt officials more interested in feeding their bank accounts than the starving children within their borders. Facing intolerable living conditions, desperate and hurting people make what may be the hardest decision of their lives to pack up all they can carry and begin walking. They decide to face the risk of going to unknown lands. Risks may involve hiking across deserts that span the US or sailing across Mediterranean waters that

separate North Africa from Europe. Any dangers of the journey are outweighed by the hope of a better life.

Several countries in the world are confronted with the problem of refugees. The US had some 10.2 million illegal immigrants. The United Nations reported in October 2023 that more than 114 million people had been displaced from their homes by violence. Many nations in Europe are struggling to find a place for refugees, asylum seekers, and others fleeing across the borders and traveling across the Mediterranean. Known for one of the most open immigration policies in Europe, as well as generous welfare systems, Sweden is plagued with violence rooted in immigrant-powered criminal networks. The Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Uganda houses refugees from war and toil in South Sudan. The Dadab and Kuma refugee camps primarily house refugees from war and economic upheaval in Somalia, and Ethiopia. The Azraq and Zaatari camps in Jordan primarily house Syrian refugees displaced from their home country.

### D. Borderless World - a Democratic Necessity!!!.

Many of society's educated people view clearly defined and defended borders as racist and xenophobic at best, and as a tool of oppression and human rights violations at worst. However, a borderless world is the key to a just, vibrant, and fair world where human potential is finally locked. The borderless world is a democratic need; people should be free to live in any part of the world they wish to. "Yaathum oore, yavarum Kerlir, theethum, nanrum pirar thara vara" (*Puranaanooru*).



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# MY TRIP TO BUFFALO, NEW YORK



I've been in Canada all my life. My family and friends have all gone outside Canada and explored other countries, but not me! I've explored the Eastern Coast of Canada and I've also been to Niagara Falls so many times. Recently, things changed though. My cousins and my mom decided to take me all the way to Niagara for a surprise. When we arrived in Niagara, my older cousin dropped a bombshell saying, "We are going to Buffalo, New York!" It took me a few seconds to digest what my cousin had just said, but then, I was overjoyed. Even if it was just for one day, this was going to be my first time visiting a different country! That is where my adventure began.



**By: Akshaya Sasitharan**  
Grade 6 Student

When we were approaching the border patrol all of us were nervous because what if they thought we were suspicious? If so, our whole trip would have been ruined! However, luckily the border patrol allowed us into America. We were all screaming in joy that we crossed the borders and got into America! I was admiring the American trees, grass, billboards and all that stuff that I've already seen in Canada. You can't really blame me for being excited about American grass. If you were me, and have never been outside of Canada, I know you'd be excited too.

My cousin drove us to this place called Macy's. Macy's seemed like the store Winners but with a different name. Once we parked the car, I made sure I received blessings the moment my foot touched American concrete. Once I did that, I caught up with my cousins and mom. We entered Macy's and right away I noticed that I was right. This was an American version of Winners. My cousins and mom bought some clothes and we moved on. We left Macy's and got back to our car to go to our next stop.

We arrived at this restaurant called iHop. It is a place that serves breakfast food, which is my favourite

kind of food. We entered the restaurant, and our waitress got us seated. We ordered fries, pancakes, waffles, a burger, and a breakfast sandwich. There were eight people including me, so there was enough food for all of us. My older cousin and I took pictures of the food before we ate, and I sent the pictures to my friends. I was texting and telling them about my exciting day while I was eating. Then after we finished eating, we all got back to the car and headed back to Canada.

That was probably one of my most memorable trips ever and I will never forget the first time I went to America.



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## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSIT IN BRAMPTON AND PEEL REGION

The City of Brampton welcomes the federal announcement of an investment of more than \$17.4 million to improve public transit in the City of Brampton and Peel Region. This investment will enable Brampton Transit to purchase 15 buses to replace vehicles that have reached the end of life and install modern fare payment systems and automatic vehicle location technology.

Brampton is home to the fastest-growing transit system in Canada, with ridership significantly outpacing population growth. In the decade leading up to the pandemic, Brampton's ridership grew by 160%, which was unprecedented compared to the average increase in Ontario of 2.3% and the national average increase of 6.9%.

Brampton Transit is the first transit system in the country to not only fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, but to exceed pre-pandemic ridership levels. As of April 2024, Brampton's year-to-date ridership is approximately 40% higher than pre-COVID-19 levels, a testament to the value and effectiveness of Brampton Transit's services.

Investments like this are needed to enable Brampton Transit to continue to address this extraordinary growth. Brampton Transit is creating a modern, integrated transit system by enhancing regional transit connections, increasing connectivity to transit infrastructure, offering sustainable transportation alternatives and implementing advanced and environmentally friendly technologies.

As a leader in transit electrification, with a strong commitment to decarbonizing its transit fleet and facilities to meet the City's corporate Greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets, Brampton Transit launched the largest global deployment of interoperable battery electric buses and high-powered overhead opportunity chargers; with plans to add 10 more electric buses in 2025 as part of its transition to a fully electric zero emission transit fleet.



For more information on the federal announcement visit Budget 2024: Investing in public transit for growing communities - Canada.ca.

For more information about Brampton Transit visit [bramptontransit.com](http://bramptontransit.com).

### Additional Information

As part of the \$17.4 million, the federal government is investing \$6.9 million in three projects through the Public Transit Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, which supports the building, expansion and upgrading of urban and rural transit networks. The Government of Ontario is investing \$5.8 million and the City of Brampton and Peel Region are investing a combined \$4.6 million.

This investment will also make it possible for Peel Region to purchase 23 specialized transit accessible buses and two electric TransHelp buses. As part of this investment, Peel Region will also upgrade its bus garages to accommodate battery electric buses, which are being added to its fleet.

### Quotes

*"We are happy to see the federal and provincial governments making much needed further investments in Brampton Transit. The support will help public transit in*

*Brampton significantly. We are replacing 15 buses that have reached their end of life and we are embracing innovation by implementing new, modern fare systems and vehicle location technology, ensuring a seamless journey for all. As Canada's fastest-growing transit network, our ridership surge defies norms, demonstrating the indispensable role of Brampton Transit. Investments like this allow us to continue to meet the needs of our riders and with an unwavering focus on sustainability and connectivity, we're shaping a future where transit is not just efficient, but environmentally responsible. Brampton Transit is not just a service; it's a pathway to a greener, more connected tomorrow."*

- **Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton**

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## Brampton Farmers' Market returns for 2024 season

The Brampton Farmers' Market is returning for the 2024 season with a new location in downtown Brampton. Presented by National Homes and Brixen Developments, this year's market will be located on Main Street South from Queen Street West to Wellington Street West and Ken Whillans Square. Starting June 15, the market will run every Saturday, from 8 am to 1 pm, rain or shine until October 12. Shop farm-fresh seasonal produce, prepared foods, unique handcrafted goods and more while enjoying live entertainment and weekly activations.

### Market details

**Date:** Every Saturday, June 15 - October 12

**Time:** 8am – 1pm

**Location:** Main Street South from Queen Street West to Wellington Street West and Ken Whillans Square.

The City thanks its generous sponsors, Algoma University, Attrell Toyota and Renewal by Andersen.



Learn more at [www.brampton.ca/markets](http://www.brampton.ca/markets).

### Quotes

*"It's that time of year again and the Brampton Farmers' Market is back! I encourage residents to come out and support local businesses while picking up some delicious farm fresh foods. The Market is a fun experience for the entire family and showcases some of the amazing businesses*

*in Brampton. I look forward to seeing the community out at the Market over the next few months!"*

- **Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton**

"The Brampton Farmers' Market is such a great time of the year. I look forward to seeing residents out enjoying the atmosphere in downtown Brampton, shopping local and exploring the wonderful vendors we have

See page 33



## City of Brampton and Brampton Arts Organization announce 50 local creatives of the 2024 PIXEL: Chapter 50 Digital Art Exhibition

### This year's exhibition celebrates Brampton's 50th birthday

In partnership with the City of Brampton, the Brampton Arts Organization (BAO) is announcing the selection of 50 local creatives to be part of its PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition. This year's creatives come from a diverse background of artistic disciplines such as dance, quilting, animation and photography. In celebration of Brampton's 50th birthday since incorporating in 1974, artists were invited to submit their work, capturing the essence of Brampton's past, present and future.

Each month from June to December 2024, up to seven digital artworks and films will be featured twice daily, with content running from 12-1 pm and 6-7 pm, on a 24' LED screen at Garden Square in downtown Brampton. Digital art will also be featured at BAO's office and Brampton's social media channels, with the potential for additional features throughout the city.

Since 2021, BAO's PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition has exhibited the work of more than 130 Brampton creatives. BAO serves as a catalyst of creativity and community. Through initiatives such as PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition, BAO aims to connect the community through art and to celebrate and showcase local talent.

For a full list of this year's creatives and their work and for more information about PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition, visit [Bramptonartsorg.ca](http://Bramptonartsorg.ca).

### About PIXEL Digital Art Exhibition

PIXEL invites Brampton artists to submit works across a variety of chosen themes and ideas. From music videos to animation and photographs, from painting to visual works, all genres and mediums are celebrated. From the big screen in Garden Square, artworks are now captured on a series of postcards distributed at events across the GTA, further promoting the artists and their practices. Over 10,000 Brampton artist postcards have been distributed. A range of themes, like Summer of Love and Brampton Reverb, have been explored. The program has, furthermore, provided specific support to Black and Indigenous artists.

### Brampton's 50th Birthday

Continued from page 32...

this year. This year's market promises to be one of the best yet!"

Martin Medeiros, Regional Councillor, Wards 3 & 4, City of Brampton

"Join us for this year's Brampton Farmers' Market. The market is one of my favourite times of the year because there are so many incredible local businesses to shop. Whether you're looking to fill your fridge with fresh, local food, view the



The City of Brampton marked its 50th birthday on January 1, 2024. From a settlement in the early 1800s, to an officially designated city in 1974, Brampton has grown into the ninth largest city in Canada and a dynamic city with a proud past and bright future. Throughout the year, we will be commemorating 50 vibrant years of Brampton's growth through a series of events, initiatives and activities. Learn more at [Brampton.ca/chapter50](http://Brampton.ca/chapter50). Brampton residents and visitors can also share exciting and memorable stories and photos on social media using #BramptonChapter50 and tagging the City of Brampton.

### Quotes

*"Congratulations to the 50 local creatives selected for the 2024 PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition! As we celebrate Brampton's 50th birthday since incorporation, this special exhibition showcases the incredible talent and creativity within our community. I commend Brampton Arts Organization for their ongoing commitment to promoting local creatives and sharing art with the greater community."*

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"The PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition continues to be a platform for celebrating Brampton's diverse cultural identity and artistic expression. This year's exhibition, marking Brampton's milestone anniversary, promises to captivate audiences with its exploration of our city's past, present and future. I'm thrilled to see our local talent highlighted in this dynamic showcase of talent and imagination." - Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5; Chair, Community Services, City of Brampton

"The selection of 50 local creatives for the 2024 PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibition

underscores Brampton Arts Organization's commitment to fostering a vibrant arts community. Through this exhibition celebrating the City's 50th birthday, we invite residents and visitors alike to engage with art in new and exciting ways, strengthening connections and celebrating the talent thriving here in our city. I look forward to seeing the impact of this year's exhibition across Brampton."- Michael Vickers, Executive Director, Brampton Arts Organization

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to nearly 700,000 people and more than 100,000 businesses. People are at the heart of everything we do. We are energized by our diverse communities, we attract investment, and we are embarking on a journey to lead technological and environmental innovation. We partner for progress to build a healthy city that is safe, sustainable, and successful. Connect with us on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Learn more at [www.brampton.ca](http://www.brampton.ca)

### About the Brampton Arts Organization (BAO)

The Brampton Arts Organization is a registered non-profit that champions Brampton's diverse arts, culture and creative industries and advocates for the #BramptonArtist. We work to build a thriving, confident, valued, and empowered creative scene by offering a range of programs, services and resources. In this, BAO is a key partner in fulfilling the City of Brampton's strategic vision and Culture Master Plan. Learn more at [bramptonartsorg.ca](http://bramptonartsorg.ca) and connect with us at Instagram, Facebook, X(formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.

works of local artisans or find that unique gift idea, head to the Brampton Farmers' Market for the perfect start to your weekend!"

Dennis Kennan, Regional Councillor, Wards 3 & 4, City of Brampton

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to nearly 700,000 people and more than 100,000 businesses. People are at the heart of

everything we do. We are energized by our diverse communities, we attract investment, and we are embarking on a journey to lead technological and environmental innovation. We partner for progress to build a healthy city that is safe, sustainable, and successful. Connect with us on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Learn more at [www.brampton.ca](http://www.brampton.ca)





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 We offer complete custom packages to ensure your big day is exactly how you dreamt it. Join us for all of your lifes milestones as we also have packages for sari ceremonies, mehendi, sangeet, bridal showers, and receptions.

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 Request pricing and packages online at [jcostours.ca](http://jcostours.ca)**



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**UNIT-6**  
600 sq.ft.

2<sup>nd</sup>  
FLOOR



**One Bedroom Unit**  
- One Master Bedroom  
- Living & Cooking Area  
- Washroom  
- Private Balconies



Invest in a home away from home.  
You can expect to be surrounded  
by restaurants, commercial shopping  
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Solace is the perfect blend of  
adventure and comfort.

Register now for floorplans,  
pricing and availability.  
With limited units available  
be sure to select yours quickly!

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**UNIT-19**  
715 sq.ft.

3<sup>rd</sup>  
FLOOR



**Two Bedrooms Unit**  
- Two Bedrooms  
- Living Area  
- Kitchen  
- Two Washrooms  
- Private Balcony





# COMMUNITY WATCH



## Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Tamil Community Over 20 Years

Durham Tamils Association is always looking for ways to help our members, youth, and our seniors. We are continuing to provide free virtual activities almost every day for kids to seniors. Thank you to our fantastic volunteers who do not expect anything and are serving the community voluntarily. DTA is truly grateful for your continued support. Also, DTA's Tamil school continues to provide virtual Tamil classes for our students.

### DTA'S HOMETLAND PROJECTS

DTA is proud to announce that we have completed over 65 homeland projects as of May 28, 2024. Watch out more for this year as we wish to continue this momentum and provide more opportunities back home. Thank you to Mr. Subramaniam Kathirithamby & Mr. Maylvahanam (Sri Lanka) for coordinating this project.

### MULLIVAICKAL REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT MAY 18

DTA proudly hosted a Mullivaikkal Remembrance day event on May 18th to honor the victims and survivors. A Mullivaikkal Kanji was also served to mark this day and pay tribute to the suffering. Thanks to all the participants and the volunteers for making this event memorable and inspiring.



### FAMILY KARAOKE NIGHTS ON FRIDAY

Join us for every Friday night for family fun and music at our Family Karaoke Night! Bring your vocal talents as we gather for a memorable evening filled with laughter, singing, and bonding. Whether you're a seasoned performer or a first-time singer, there's a song for everyone to enjoy.

We will provide your favorite tunes so get ready to create lasting memories. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to come celebrate your talents.



### DTA EVOLVING ELDER CARE IN HOME SUPPORT

We are proud to announce that DTA will be providing Evolving Elder Care in Home support. This will allow us to provide these services to any Seniors in need in Durham. We can provide following service:

- Meal Delivery
- Transportation
- Volunteer Drop offs:
  - Grocery Assistance
  - Doctors Appointments
- Friendly Visits
- Light House Keeping Assistance

For more information please contact our office Mon-Fri (647) 968 9549 or (647) 286 9549. You can also visit our website @ DTAseniorsinhomesupport.ca

DTA and the volunteers have graciously given rides to our seniors to temples on auspicious days and have delivered hot meals to more than 300 seniors with this program.

### DTA'S SENIORS

DTA is keeping our seniors fully occupied with multiple activities and programs. DTA is here to support you in any way. If you want to participate in our programs, please check our monthly calendars. Please register for virtual Seniors programs at durhamtamils.org. Thank you to our fantastic volunteers who do not expect anything and are serving the community voluntarily. DTA is truly grateful for your continued support.

**Durham Tamil Association Evolving Elder Care In-Home Support Senior /Transportation Service**

Seniors Onboard: A volunteer-based service for eligible seniors with low-income and vulnerable, aged 55 and up.

**OUR SERVICE**

- Temple Drop off (Drop off / pick up)
- Church Drop off (Drop off / pick up)
- Medical Appointment (Drop off/ pick up)
- Grocery shopping (Drop off / pick up)

**CONTACT US**

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00am - 5:00PM

Contact Number:

- (647) 968-9549
- (647) 286-9549

For More Information Visit Our Website:

[dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca](http://dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca)

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Age Well at Home Initiative

### DTA SENIOR'S MAY MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's March monthly meeting will be held on Sunday Jun 30, 2024 at 5:00 pm at DTA Centre.

**66B Harwood Ave S, Ajax L1S 2H6.**

**Event Time: 5-9 pm**

Please all Senior (ages 55+) members attend the meeting. Register online - [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org)

Members who were born in March, please mention in the comments section to organize your cake-cutting at the meeting.

**Durham Tamil Association Evolving Elder Care -in Home Support for seniors**

**Training**

- Free Training and a certificate of completion from ComputeK College in Ajax
- 50 volunteer hours placement

**Benefits**

- Free Vulnerable Check
- Unlock valuable life skills with Free Standard CPR and First Aid Training
- Volunteer Travel Expense \$0.58/km
- Join us to make a positive impact on seniors lives while gaining valuable skills and experiences.

**Contact US**

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00am - 5:00PM

Contact Number:

- (647) 968-9549
- (647) 286-9549

Durham Tamil Association  
66 Harwood Ave, S.Ajax L1S 2H6

**Volunteers Needed!**

Serving Eight Municipalities

- Brock
- Oshawa
- Uxbridge
- Clarington
- Scugog
- Ajax
- Pickering
- Whitby

Join our volunteer team and gain more than just experience - unlock valuable life skills while making a positive impact on seniors' lives in Durham!

**Volunteer Gala : Twice a Year!**

- Summer Gala 2024
- Winter Gala 2024
- Spring Gala 2025
- September Gala 2025

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Age Well at Home Initiative





## RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS (ADULTS & YOUTH) FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECT:

### EVOLVING ELDERCARE - IN-HOME SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Next training sessions are:  
**June 15th & 16th- Cohort #5**  
**June 22nd 23rd Cohort #6**

**Saturday workshop** - 4 hours in-person. Time: 10-2 pm.  
**Sunday workshop** - 6 hours virtual Zoom class from 9 am - 3 pm.

You can register for either one of the workshops.

Do not miss out on this great opportunity!

At Durham Tamil Association, we enable our volunteers with free training and a certificate of completion from Computek College in Ajax. Join us to make a positive impact on seniors' lives while gaining valuable skills and experiences. Together, let's shape a brighter future!"

### DTA TRIP TO NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

Durham Tamil Association is organizing a THREE-DAY TRIP TO THE NEW JERSEY HINDU TEMPLE AND NEW YORK CITY - AUGUST 16TH 17TH AND 18TH 2024

#### PRICING

- Two-person occupancy is **\$375/PER PERSON.**
- Three-person occupancy is **\$325/PER PERSON.**
- Four-person occupancy is **\$275/PER PERSON.**



- **BAPS SWAMINARAYAN AKSHARDHAM USA**
- **SRI GURUVAAYOORAPPAN TEMPLE.**
- **TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK.**
- **STATUE OF LIBERTY, NEW YORK.**
- **EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, NEW YORK.**
- **WALL STREET & DOWNTOWN NEW YORK.**

**Package Includes:**  
 3 DAYS TOUR BUS  
 2 NIGHT ACCOMMODATION  
 FRIDAY BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER  
 SATURDAY & SUNDAY BREAKFAST

REGISTER ONLINE:  
**durhamtamils.org**

E-Transfer fees to dtatravel1@gmail.com. Please indicate "NEW JERSEY & the name(s) of the people you're sending the funds for in the comments."

## COMMUNITY WATCH



### THANK YOU TO DTA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS

DTA thanks our annual sponsors Computek College of Business, Healthcare & Technology

Nava Wilson LLP. Chapel Ridge Funeral Home & Cremation, and all our sponsors for your continued support throughout the year. If you are interested in being annual sponsor please reach out to the below contacts.

For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit *www*.

**DurhamTamils.Org**  
**Tel 905.428.7007**  
*(Unity Is Strength)*



### Evolving Elder Care In-Home Support

#### Free Meal Delivery

Offers the option of either veg or non veg

- Hot, Freshly Prepared Meals
- Timely deliveries are Coordinated by Volunteers
- Serving Eight Municipalities in Durham: Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington, Brock, Uxbridge, Scugog.




**CONTACT US:**

Office Hours: Monday through Friday  
 Contact Number:  
 (647) 968-9549  
 (647) 286-9549

Please place your order a minimum of 5 days before the delivery date.  
 Eligibility: Vulnerable and Low-Income Seniors: Ages 55 and Up



[dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca](http://dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca)

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Age Well at Home Initiative





**The Durham Tamil Association**  
 "Evolving Elder Care In-Home Support," a volunteer-based service for eligible seniors with low-income and vulnerable, aged 55 and up.

#### OUR FREE SERVICE

- Meal Delivery
- Transportation :Worship Places,(Temple, Mosque, Church) Malls & Restaurants etc.
- Volunteer Drop off/ pick up: -Medical Appointment, Grocery shopping, Hospital/Doctors Appointments etc..
- Friendly Visits
- Light House Keeping

**CONTACT US:**

Office Hours: Monday through Friday  
 Contact Number:  
 • (647) 968-9549  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE:



[dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca](http://dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca)

## DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

### EVOLVING ELDER CARE IN-HOME SUPPORT



**Ages 55 and up**

**Vulnerable and Low-Income seniors**

**SERVING EIGHT MUNICIPALITIES IN DURHAM**  
 PICKERING, AJAX, WHITBY, OSHAWA  
 CLARINGTON, BROCK, UXBRIDGE, SCUGOG

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Age Well at Home Initiative







## THREE-DAY TRIP TO NEW JERSEY HINDU TEMPLE AND NEW YORK CITY

**AUGUST 16TH 17TH AND 18TH 2024**

- BAPS SWAMINARAYAN AKSHARDHAM USA
- SRI GURUVAAYOORAPPAN TEMPLE
- TIME SQUARE, NEW YORK
- LIBERTY STATUE, NEW YORK
- EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, NEW YORK
- WALL STREET & DOWN TOWNE NEW YORK

### Package Include:

- 3DAYS TOUR BUS
- 2 NIGHT ACCOMMODATION
- FRIDAY BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER
- SATURDAY & SUNDAY BREAKFAST

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY \$375/PERSON  
THREE OCCUPANCY 325/PERSON  
FOUR OCCUPANCY 275/PERSON

**REGISTER AT: DURHAMDAMILS.ORG**

**CALL 647 606 1222**

**pick up locations:**

DTA Centre 66 Harwood Ave. S, Ajax, ON  
and  
Wal Mart at Millner and 401 in Scarborough





### Indoor cricket comes to RIM Park this summer!

Register with your friends and play together

WATERLOO'S OWN PickupHub

**CRICKET GAMES AT RIM PARK RUN 6 TO 6:50 P.M. OR 7 TO 7:50 P.M. SIGN UP AT**

**HTTP://PICKUPHUB.NET/CITY-WATERLOO 18+**



## Call for Volunteers

### JULY 1 COMMUNITY PICNIC

[waterloo.ca/volunteer](http://waterloo.ca/volunteer)

THE CITY OF  **Waterloo** 

Call for volunteers. We are currently looking for event helpers for the July 1 Community Picnic!

Volunteer opportunities with @citywaterloo

include helping with set-up or tear-down, information booths, and roaming festival assistants.

Sign up - <http://waterloo.ca/volunteer>

The Waterloo Public Square came to life on May 31st at the first Art Market of the season

(hosted by @CreateWaterloo)

- the perfect time to celebrate and admire all the new upgrades





# Mississauga makes adding a garden suite easy with free design plans



One-bedroom garden suite with beige brick and vertical wood siding  
Artist rendering of the one-bedroom garden suite



Studio garden suite with blue wood siding  
Artist rendering of the studio garden suite

The City is making it easier to build a garden suite by offering free, pre-approved plans for Mississauga homeowners. Garden suites are small homes that can be built in many backyards citywide. They are a good option for homeowners who want to downsize, need a separate space for family members or who want a rental unit for extra income.

“Today we’re delivering another key initiative from Mississauga’s Housing Action Plan. Our garden suite plans are a great example of how we’re streamlining City processes to get homes built more quickly and help with affordability,” said Andrew Whittemore, Commissioner of Planning and Building. “Housing is a top priority and these plans are one more way that we’re helping to make it easier to get building.”

There are two standardized garden suite models to choose from:  
Open-concept studio – 40 square metres (430 square feet)

One-bedroom suite – 55 square metres (600 square feet)

Both models include a kitchen space and three-piece washroom.

The pre-approved plans, which can be downloaded from the City’s website, help residents save time and money as they won’t need to

hire a designer to draw custom plans.

## Adding density in a gentle way

Garden suites are a good way to add density to Mississauga neighbourhoods in a gentle way. Gentle density helps bring people to areas where schools, parks, community centres and other types of infrastructure is already in place. It can also help reduce sprawl by encouraging more compact, walkable communities.

Whittemore added, “Like other maturing cities, we’re seeing major growth in our urban areas – such as our downtown core – but many of our neighbourhoods are shrinking. Allowing more housing types – such as fourplexes, triplexes and garden suites – is a good way to reinvigorate communities experiencing population decline.”

## Using pre-approved plans

Homeowners can customize their interior and exterior garden suite finishes such as paint, plumbing fixtures, siding, windows, doors and flooring as these items don’t require changes to the pre-approved plans. The layout of the suite – such as wall, door, window and room locations – can not be modified.

One of the benefits of the pre-approved plans is that homeowners can skip the design phase and start working directly with a licensed builder. Homeowners will be responsible for all building costs and may need support to help prepare the building permit application.

Visit [mississauga.ca/garden-suites](https://mississauga.ca/garden-suites) to learn more, see renderings and download the pre-approved plans.

## Background

Increasing ‘Missing Middle’ housing in low-rise communities is a key action in the City’s housing plan. In late 2023, the City updated its Official Plan and zoning rules to make it easier for homeowners to build:

Up to two additional residential units (ARUs) in addition to the primary home; or

A new fourplex on a lot (or convert their current home to four separate units)

Read *Growing Mississauga: An Action Plan for New Housing* to learn how the City is working to meet the province’s goal of building 120,000 new homes while streamlining building approvals and making homes more affordable.





# Cooling Centres

During times of extreme heat, visit our facilities, pools, and splash pads to stay cool. Anyone can be impacted by extreme heat but those that are most vulnerable include older adults, infants and young children, people who work or exercise outdoors, and those with certain medical conditions. Please remember to check on friends, family and neighbours who may be at risk.

## Designated Cooling Centres

- ▶ Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool
- ▶ Centennial Pool
- ▶ Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre
- ▶ Elgin West Community Centre and Pool
- ▶ Oak Ridges Community Centre
- ▶ Richvale Community Centre and Pool
- ▶ Rouge Woods Community Centre

## Beat the heat at a Pool

Check out our swimming schedule

## Stay cool at our Splash Pads

Splash Pads (open between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.)

## Safety Tips

It is important to keep in mind that extreme heat and humidity can cause serious health problems. Be sure to keep the following tips in mind in case of a heat event.







## SPECIAL FEATURE

# SRI RANGANATHASWAMY TEMPLE SRIRANGAM TAMIL NADU, INDIA

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

### INTRODUCTION

*Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple* also known as Thiruvaranga Tirupati, is one of the most illustrious Vaishnava temples in the country dedicated to Lord Ranganatha, a reclining form of Hindu deity, Lord Vishnu. Srirangam is a neighbourhood in the city of Tiruchirappalli in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. A river island, Srirangam is bound by the *Kaveri River* on one side and its *tributary Kollidam* on the other side. Considered as the first among the *108 Divya Desams*, a group of Vishnu temples, it is famous for the *Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple*, the largest temple complex in India and the biggest functioning *Hindu Temple* in the world.

Srirangam is the foremost of the eight self-manifested shrines (*Swayam Vyakata Kshetras*) of Lord Vishnu. The temple is also known as *Thiruvaranga Tirupati*, *Periyakovil*, *Bhoologa Vaikuntam* and *Bhogamandabam*. The temple underwent many changes during the rule of *Cholas*, *Cheras*, *Pandiyas*, *Hoysalas*, *Vijayanagar Kings* and *nayak of Madurai*.

### LEGEND OF THIS TEMPLE



According to the regional legend, the deity *Rama* is regarded to have performed *aradhanam* (puja) to Vishnu's idol (deity in a reclining posture). He is regarded to have granted the idol to *Vibhishana* (the brother of *Ravana* of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*) to take back with him to Lanka. Rama informed him that he could not set the idol upon the earth; and if he did so, the idol would become bound upon the site. While travelling towards Lanka, he came upon the banks of the river Kaveri. He placed the idol on the banks while an *utsavam* was in progress. When the utsavam was over, the idol refused to move. According to some accounts, it was because Vishnu grew fond of Srirangam. When Vibhishana requested the deity to come along with him, Vishnu refused, but promised to bless Vibhishana, by always facing the South (the direction of Lanka, home to Vibhishana). It is due to this reason the idol of the deity in a reclining posture) is believed to face the south. The Chola King *Dharmavarcholan* and *Killivalavan* developed the shrine into the present size of the temple, with the contributions of *Thirumangai Azhwar*. They built the basic foundations and main building.



As per another legend, *Sanakara*, the four child sages, came for a *darshana* of Ranganatha in Srirangam. They were stopped by *Jaya* and *Vijaya*, the guardians of *Vaikuntha*. In spite of their pleadings, they were refused entry. In anger, all four of them cursed the guardians of Vaikuntha. In anger, all four of them cursed the guardians in one voice and left. The guardians approached Vishnu and told Him about the curse. Ranganatha said that he would not be able to revert the curse and gave them two options: be born as demons opposing Vishnu in three births or be good human beings in the following seven births. Eager to be back with the Lord soon, the guardians accepted being demons and are believed to have taken the form of *Hiranyaksha* and *Hiranyakasipu*; *Ravana* and *Kumbhakarna*; and *Sisupala* and *Dantavakra*. Vishnu assumed four *avatars* – *Varaha*, *Narasimha*, *Rama* and *Krishna*, respectively, to kill the demons in each one of those births.

The *Mahabharata* says that after his marriage with *Ulupi* (the naga princess), *Arjuna* went to various pilgrim centres present in the south and visited this temple and offered prayers to Ranganatha. There is a mandapam called *Arjuna Mandapam* in the temple.

### ARCHITECTURE



The temple is enclosed by seven concentric enclosures with courtyards (termed *prakarams* or *mathil suvar*). Each layer has walls and gopurams, which were built or fortified in and after 16<sup>th</sup> century. The temple is aligned to the north-south axis, on an island surrounded

by the Kaveri River. This river has long been considered sacred, and called the *Dakshina Ganges* or the *Ganges of the South*. The outer two prakarams are residential and markets with shops, restaurants and flower stalls. The five inner courtyards have shines to Vishnu and His various avatars such as Rama and Krishna. Despite the construction of various mandapams and gopurams over a span of many centuries, the architecture of the



Ranganathaswamy temple is one of the better illustrations of Hindu temple planometric geometry per Agama design texts in the Tamil tradition. According to George Mitchell, a professor and historian on Indian architecture, the regulating geometry and plan of Srirangam site takes on "a ritual dimension since all the architectural components, especially the focal gopuras and the most important colonnades and mandapas, are arranged along the axes dictated by the cardinal directions". This alignment integrates the routes that devotees follow as they journey into the innermost sanctum.

### MANDAPAMS, VAHANAS & GOPURAMS MANDAPAMS:

#### *Hall of 1000 Pillars:*

This is an example of a planned theatre-like structure. Made of granite, it was constructed during the Vijayanagara period (1336-1565). The great hall is traversed by one wide aisle in the centre for the whole of its greater length, and intersected by transepts



## SPECIAL FEATURE



of like dimension running across at right angles. There still remain seven side aisles on each side, in which all the pillars are equally spaced out. **Sesharayar Mandapam:** This is the most artistically interesting of the halls that the Nayaks added to the complex on the east side of the fourth enclosure. This hall is celebrated for the **40 leaping animals** carved on to the piers at its bearing riders on their backs, trampling their hoofs upon the heads of rampant tigers and seem only natural and congruous among such weird surroundings. **The Garuda Mandapam** (hall of the legendary bird deity of Lord Vishnu, Garuda):



This is located on the south side of the third enclosure, is another Nayak addition. Courtly portrayed sculptures, reused from an earlier structure, are fixed to the piers lining the central aisle. A free-standing shrine inside the hall contains a large seated figure of **Garuda**; the eagle-headed God faces north towards the principal sanctum.

**Kili (Parrot) Mandapam:**

This mandapam is located next to the Ranganatha shrine, in the first enclosure of the temple. Elephant balustrades skirt the access steps that ascend to a spacious open area. This is bounded by decorated piers with rearing animals and attached colonettes in the finest 17<sup>th</sup>-century manner. Four columns in the middle define a raised dais; their shafts are embellished with undulating stalks.

**The Ranga Vilasa Mandapam:**

This is a huge one, where the weary devotee may rest a while and watch others haggle and purchase items for rituals. The Ranga Vilasa Mandapam carries the sculptures of Bala Ramayana and exquisite murals.

**VAHANAS:**

The **Vahanas** (Vehicles on which The Lord is mounted and carried on the shoulders by devotees) are by themselves excellent pieces of architecture on wood. Wood is carved into the shapes of animals, exotic birds, sun, moon, trees etc. and elegant gold or silver plating is done on them. The **Garuda** vahana, **Simha** vahana, **Yanai** vahana, **Kudirai** vahana, **Hanumantha** vahana, **Yazhi** vahana, **Sesha** vahana, **Annapakshi** vahana, **Otrai** and **Rettai Prabhai** vahana are all examples of unmatched beauty. To see Lord Ranganatha mounted on them is a treat to watch especially as he moves along the streets of Srirangam

inch by inch amongst the sea of devotees. An interesting piece of history is the Yanai Vahana. An ordinary eye would describe it as an Elephant, however on a closer look one would observe that it has four tusks. A quick search on the Encarta Encyclopedia will let us know that these four-tusked elephants were known as Mastodont idea, which are said to have evolved around 38 million years ago and became extinct about 15 million years ago, when the shaggy and two tusked Mastodons increased in population.

**GOPURAMS (Gateway Towers):****Rajagopuram:**

There are 21 Gopurams among which the towering Rajagopuram is the tallest temple tower in Asia. The 13-tiered Rajagopuram has a base constructed around 1500 AD and later completed in 1987 by Ahobhila Mutt, a historic **Sri Vaishnava Hindu Monastery**. This tower dominates the landscape for miles around, while the remaining 20 gopurams were built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The gopurams have pronounced projections in the middle of the long sides, generally with openings on each of the successive levels. The Rajagopuram was consecrated on March 25, 1987. The length and breadth at the base of the Rajagopuram is 166 and 97 feet (50.6 and 29.6 m), while the length and breadth at the top is 98 and 32 feet (29.9 and 9.8 m). The 13-glistening copper **kalasams** atop the tower weigh 135 kg (298 lb) each, are 3.12 m (10 ft. 3 in) high with a 1.56 m (5 ft. 1 in.) diameter vessel. All the **Gopurams** were repaired and repainted during the **Mahasamprokshanam** which occurred in 2015 after 28 years.

**Vellai Gopuram (White tower):**

According to history, the Gopuram was named in honour of **Vellaiyammal**, danseuse and **Devadasi** (a female servant of God), who resided at Srirangam and sacrificed her life to protect Sri Namperumal, the idol of the processional deity, during the Mohammedan invasion of the town in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This tower on the east side of the fourth enclosure has a steep pyramidal superstructure that reaches a height of almost 44 metres (144 ft.).

**KOTTARAMS & TANKS****Kottarams (Granaries):**

The Kottaram houses the huge Granaries which stand testimony to a systematic food security planning not only to the temple, but probably to the entire population of the temple town.

**Water Harvesting Systems (Temple Tanks):**

The temple complex has two large Temple tanks inside it, **Chandra Pushkarani** and **Surya Pushkarani**. The complex has been built in a way that all the water collected flows into the two tanks. The capacity of each Pushkarani is around 2 million litres and the water is cleansed by the actions of fishes in it. Apart from these, there are 10 more Temple Tanks around that come under the control of the temple management. Open sand and **Nandavanams** (Flower Gardens) help in absorbing rain water.

**SHRINES**

The temple complex includes over 50 shrines. These are dedicated to **Vishnu**, **Lakshmi** as well as various Vaishnava scholars and poets. The shrines to Vishnu display Him in his various avatars, as well as His iconography. For example, Sri Ranganathaswamy temple

shrines include those of **Chakkaratazhwar**, **Narasimha**, **Rama**, **Hayagriva** and **Gopala Krishna**. The Venugopala shrine, one of the most elaborately carved, is in the south-west corner of the fourth enclosure of the temple was rebuilt by **Chokkanatha Nayak**, according to an inscription dated 1674. The main shrine for Lord Ranganatha is in the innermost courtyard. The sanctum has a **Golden Vimanam** (crown tower over the sanctum sanctorum). It is shaped like the Tamil **Omkara** (Om symbol), shows anthropomorphic **Paravasudeva** on its gable, has an etching of Ramanuja as well on it. In this hall a serpent, can be seen. **Adishesha** has five hoods and is coiled into three and a half rounds. Vishnu's head rests on a small cylindrical pillow and His right palm which faces upwards rests next to His head. A pendant containing **Lakshmi's** image is placed on Ranganatha's chest. Ranganatha's crown, hands and feet are plated with gold. Neither **Sridevi** (goddess Lakshmi) or **Bhudevi** (goddess Earth) are depicted near His feet, as is found in late medieval era paintings. The sanctum does not show **Brahma** coming out of or connected to His navel either. However, the procession images of **Sridevi**, **Bhudevi** and **Ranganathar**, otherwise known as **Azhagiyamanavalan** and **Namperumal** reside within the sanctum



in different places to ease their darshana (viewing). The only source of illumination is from two ghee lamps, one hanging from the ceiling and another placed on the ground both positioned near the feet of Lord Ranganatha.

The sanctum can be entered through the south gateway, one the reclining Vishnu is facing. The doorway as one enters from the **Mukhamandapam**, also called the **Gayatri Mantapa**, is flanked by **Jaya** and **Vijaya**, the guardians of **Vaikuntha**. The sanctum chamber is round, even though the vimana above is an oval projection. The circumambulation path (**pradakshana-patha**) is set in a square, to journey clockwise. The **Garbha-griha** is surrounded by a raised square **Thiruvunnali**, encircling pillars and another inner square. As the devotee completes the circumambulation around the resting Vishnu, one sees four additional images. On the western wall inside the core sanctum is **Lord Ganesha**, on the northeastern side is **Yoga Narsimha** (Narsimha seated in Yoga asana on sesha), and on the eastern wall are the carvings of Ranganatha's footprints, footwear, which can be seen through a small glass panel on the southern wall, next to the sanctum's doorway. The exterior of the vimana and attached **mandapam** (hall) have intricately carved pilasters with fluted shafts, double capitals and pendant lotus brackets. Sculptures are placed in the niches of three sides of the sanctuary walls; maidens enhance the walls in between. The elevation is punctuated with a





## SPECIAL FEATURE

secondary set of pilasters that support shallow eaves at different levels to cap larger and smaller recesses. The sanctuary is crowned in the traditional fashion with a hemispherical roof. The double-curved eaves of the entrance porch on the east side are connected in a later columned hall. **Dhanvantri**, a great physician of the Hindu mythology is considered to be an *avatar* of Vishnu. There is a separate shrine for Dhanvantri within the temple. The shrine of Ranganatha's consort, **Ranganayaki** (Lakshmi) is in the second precinct of the temple with 2 main idols (moola moortis) and 1 procession idol (utsava moorti). During the festival processions, Ranganayaki does not visit Ranganatha, but it is He who visits her. Ranganatha visiting Ranganayaki and being with her is called as **Saerthi** during **Panguni Uthiram**. There are three images of Ranganayaki within the sanctum. There are separate shrines for major saints in the Vaishnava tradition.

### SPECIAL FESTIVALS

#### **Vaikunta Ekadashi:**

**Pagal Patthu** (10-day time) and **Ra Patthu** (10 night time) festival is celebrated in the month of **Margazhi** (Dec.–Jan.) for twenty days. The first ten days are referred to as Pagal Patthu and the second 10 days are referred to as Ra Patthu. The first day of Ra Patthu is **Vaikunta Ekadashi**. The 11<sup>th</sup> day of each fortnight in **Hindu Calendar** is called **Ekadashi** and the holiest of all Ekadashis as per Vaishnava tradition is the **Vaikunta Ekadashi**. During the festival, through song and dance, this place is affirmed to be **Bhuloka Vaikuntam** (Heaven on Earth). **Araiyaar Seva** is a divine colloquium of **Araiyaars**, who recite and enact **Nalaya Divya Prabhandam**, the 4000 verses of Azhwars. Araiyaars are born to Araiyaar tradition most prevalent in Sri Vaishnava families in Srirangam, Azhwar Thirunagiri and Srivilliputtur. The tradition of Araiyaar Sevai was started by **Nathamuni** during 10<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed as per Hindu Mythology, that crores of Gods come down to witness the event. The processional deity is brought to the 1000-pillared hall on the morning of Vaikunta Ekadashi through the **Paramapada Vaasal** (gate to Paradise). Lakhs of pilgrims rush to enter it after the gate is opened as the deity passes through it as it is believed that one who enters here will reach **Vaikuntam** (the abode of Vishnu) after death. The gate is open only during the ten days of Ra Patthu. On the last day of the festival, the poet Nammazhwar is said to be given salvation.

#### **Jyeshthabisheka:**

The annual ornament cleaning festival is called Jyeshthabisheka (the first anointing) and is celebrated during the Tamil month of **aani** (June-July). The icons of all deities are abulated with water brought in large vessels of gold and silver.

#### **Brahmotsavam:**

Brahmotsavam (Prime festival) is held during the Tamil month of **Panguni** (March-April). Processions go round the Chithrai street in the evening. On the second day, the deity is taken to a garden inside the temple. On the third day, the deity is taken in a palanquin through the river Kaveri to a village on the opposite shore named **Jiyarpuram**.

#### **Other Festivals:**

The annual temple chariot festival, called **Rathotsavam** is celebrated during the Tamil month of **Thai** (Jan.-Feb.) and the processional deity, utsavar is taken round the temple in the temple car. **Vasanthotsavam** is celebrated during the Tamil month of **Vaikasi** (May-June)

which according to inscriptions is celebrated from 1444 CE.

### THE STORY OF A MUSLIM PRINCESS IN LOVE WITH LORD RANGANATHA

The importance of the idol of Lord Ranganatha is not restricted to Hindus and it is believed that Malik Kafur, a muslim invader from Delhi once took this idol with him to the capital. The temple devotees in a daring act of recovery travelled to Delhi, where they charmed the emperor with their histrionics. The pleased emperor returned the idol to them and it went to Srirangam with an extra ardent follower in tow. The new admirer was Princess Surathani, the apple of the eye of the Sultan. The princess had fallen in love with the deity and accompanied it all the way to Srirangam. She became the Divine Consort of Lord Ranganatha. She attained moksha in front of the idol. At the Srirangam temple, a small Sannidhi stands almost unnoticed in the corridor bordering the sanctum sanctorum. One might not even know that it houses the sannidhi of **Thulukka Nachiyar**.

### BHAKTI MOVEMENT & VAISHNAVA SCHOLARSHIP

#### **BHAKTI MOVEMENT:**



**Nalayira Divya Prabhandam** is a collection of 4000 hymns sung by twelve **Azhwar** saints spread over 300 years (from the late 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century CE) and collected by **Nathamuni**. Sri Ranganathaswamy temple is the only one out of the 108 temples referred to as **Divya Desams**, that was sung in praise by all the Azhwars (Poet-saints of the Bhakti movement), having a total of 247 pasurams (divine hymns) against its name. Acharyas (Gurus) of all schools of thought – **Advaita**, **Visishtadvaita** and **Dvaita** recognize the immense significance of the temple, regardless of their affiliations. **Divya Desams** refer to 108 Lord Vishnu temples that are mentioned in the works of the Azhwars. Of them 105 are in India, 1 in **Nepal**, while 2 are located outside of the Earthly realms. **Kambar** is a 12<sup>th</sup>-century Tamil poet who composed the **Kamba Ramayanam**, a work inspired from the epic, **Valmiki Ramayana**. He is believed to have come to this temple to get the approval of his work from scholars. The **Jain** scholar **Tirunarungundam** honoured the work and it resulted in **Tamil** and **Sanskrit** scholars approving the work. The open hall where he recited his verse lies close to the Ranganayaki shrine within the temple. **Arunachala Kavirayar** an 18<sup>th</sup>-century poet composed the entire **Ramayana** as an **Opera**

called as **Rama Natakam** in Tamil language and few **Manipravalam** songs. Even though the priests permitted Arunachala Kavirayar to compose the Rama Natakam in **Srirangam**, Arunachala Kavirayar wanted to seek permission from Lord Ranganatha also. So, he composed a Keerthana, "**En Pallikondeeraiya Sri Ranganatha**" (O Lord! Why did you stop and sleep here?) in **Kedaragowla** set to **Adi tala** on the spot to seek Ranganath's permission. That night both the poet and the temple Priests had separate visions of Lord Ranganatha. The poet was granted permission and was also asked to sing about **Parivaara Devatas** and the priest was asked to accept **Arangetram** after such songs were sung by the poet.

#### **VAISHNAVA SCHOLARSHIP:**

Many of the medieval Sri Vaishnava scholars like **Nathamuni**, **Ramanuja**, **Pillai Lokacharya**, **Vedanta Desika** and **Manavala Maamunigal** are associated with this temple. Ramanuja was a theologian, philosopher and scriptural exegete. He is seen by Srivaishnavas as the third and one of the most important teacher (Acharya) of their tradition after **Nathamuni** and **Yamunacharya**, and by Hindus in general as the leading expounder of **Visishtadvaita**, one of the classical interpretations of the dominant **Vedanta** school of **Hindu Philosophy**. Ramanuja renounced his family life and went to Srirangam to occupy the pontificate and Srirangam became the stronghold of him and his disciples. While in Srirangam, he compiled, the doctrine of Visishtadvaita philosophy, **Sri Bhashyam** and works like **Gadhya Trayam**, which is recited in the temple during the ninth day (Panguni Uttaram) of the festival of **Aadi Brahmotsavam**. He attained divinity in Srirangam. The disciples of Ramanuja got his permission to install three metallic images, one each at **Sriperumpudur**, **Melukote** and the third, at **Srirangam**. He is found seated in the **Padmasana** (Yogic sitting posture), depicting **Gnyana Mudrai** (symbol of knowledge) with his right palm, which is also known as **Thaanaana Thirumeni** (Selfsame body). **Kovil Ozhugu** is a codification of all temple practices, religious and administrative, shaped and institutionalized by Sri Ramanuja after receiving due rights Sri Thiruvarangathamudanar. A stone inscription to this effect is installed in the **Arya patal vaasal** (main gate before the first precinct). **Pancharanga Kshetrams** (also called Pancharangams), meaning the five Rangams or Ranganathas) is a group of five sacred Hindu temples, dedicated to Lord Ranganatha, a form of Lord Vishnu, on the banks of the Kaveri River, The five Pancharanga Kshetrams in order of their successive locations, on the banks of the Kaveri River are: The **Srirangapatnam**, called the **Adi Ranga**, the first temple on the banks of the Kaveri River from the upstream side; the **Sri Ranganathaswamy** temple at **Srirangam**, known as **Adya Ranga** (the last temple), **Appalarangam** or **Koviladi** at **Tiruppernagar** in Tamil Nadu, **Parimala Ranganatha Perumal Temple** or **Mayuram** at **Indalur**, **Mayiladuthurai** and **Vatarngam** at **Sirkazhi**, the **Sarangapani temple** at **Kumbakonam** is mentioned in place of Vatarangam in some references.

**May Lord Ranganatha's Blessings be with us all!!!**



## Short Story

## COMMUNITY WATCH



# Bat Shooting



**By : Siva Sinniah**

It was early morning around 4:00 am there was shouting near our gate “please help me, the police are taking me to the station”. My father who was in deep sleep suddenly got up and ran to the gate with a flashlight in hand. I also got up and ran behind him. We saw Thurai, our neighbor with both hands tied by a towel, behind his back and being escorted by two policemen. He pleaded to my father to help him to be released by them. One of the policemen who is a Sinhalese told my father, in broken Tamil, that this fellow is a robber caught red-handed and that they are taking him to the police station. Since my father knew Sinhalese very well, he spoke to them and got the full story. This story was told to me by my father later.

It was a usual practice to shoot at bats, which gather in groups to eat Olive fruits, which are ripening on the trees. Some of our people wait for them under the tree to shoot them for their flesh. Normally policemen go on rounds on their bicycles throughout the town to maintain Law and Order. On that particular night two policemen on their rounds, saw two men crouching under a tree in a narrow lane. When the policeman turned on their flashlight, they saw the policemen at the corner of the street and started running, so the police chased them. One could not run fast and was caught by the police, whereas the other guy who was a good runner, ran through the narrow lane and hid himself in a temple nearby. The policeman asked Thurai as to the identity of the other one who ran away. He replied that he doesn't know who he was and denied any wrongdoing. The police were under the impression that these two guys must have come with an idea of robbing a house, since the guy who got caught had a cake of soap in his hand. Usually, the robbers go with the piece of soap to make an impression of the door lock so that

they can make a duplicate key, to open it when the owner's are not at home. This was the explanation given to my father by the policeman. So, they had every reason to take him to the police station for further inquiry. Since this guy was not willing to identify the person who ran away, made them suspect this guy has an accomplice. So, my father told Thurai to go to the police station and that he will come to bail him out after 8:00, when the inspector arrives to the station. The policemen took him away. We came back to resume our sleep.

After about 15 minutes we heard another person calling my father to come to the gate. When we went there, we saw my father's friend Singham with the gun. He told my father that they were crouching under the Olive Tree to shoot bats, when the policeman flashed the light on them, they started running because he didn't have the license for the gun. He ran fast and hid himself in the temple compound and Thurai got caught by the policeman, because he was not able to catch up with him. My father yelled at him for not getting the license for the gun and told him that he knew the Inspector and would try to get the fellow released after 8:00 am. In the meantime, my mother also got up when she heard the commotion at the gate. We went back to the house. My father told what had happened at the gate and told her that he was going to the police station to help the guy who was arrested. As usual my mother said to him that it is better to inform his family about his arrest and not to get involved unnecessarily, since this is a police case. Those days people were afraid of the police, since they were well known for unnecessary attacks on innocent civilians. But my father, who we used to help the people in the community, did not listen to my mother's advice.

In the meantime, neighbors started assembling at my house in the morning, inquiring as to what had happened early in the morning, since it was a close-knit community. So, my father had to explain to them that this was a simple matter and that we need not be worried about it. Message was passed to Thurai's family about his arrest. Since there was nobody else in the family to help him, his oldest son agreed to accompany my father to the police station. This news of his arrest spread like wildfire in the area, as this was an unusual situation they have never seen.

Now is the time for me to tell you about this bat flesh. Some of the people in the area had a belief that bat flesh is good for asthmatic patients and it is better than chicken. So, people with asthma started eating bat flesh. Whether they were cured, nobody knew. But the practice of eating bat flesh was in existence among some people for many years. Since bats are in the habit of eating Olive fruits and other fruits, their flesh seems to be very delicious.

While my father and Thurai's son was getting ready to go to the station, Thurai came home and told my father that the Inspector of police was a Tamil man and when he explained the situation as to what happened the previous night, he told him to tell his friend, to go and get a license for the gun and if he's caught the second time, he will be faced with the penalty. So, we were all happy to see him back safely. My father asked Thurai why he was carrying a piece of soap that morning. He replied with a smile that he was planning to take a shower at the temple well after the shooting, which landed him in trouble. The story of bat shooting started spreading all over the town and I still remember it as a memorable event.





# The Beautiful Terrible Signs: THE ONGOING SAGA OF RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE



By Ariaratnam Gobikrishna, MD

Every physician likely recalls an unforgettable moment from his or her clinical rotation as a medical student that profoundly impacted him or her, leaving an indelible mark. For me it was the encounter with a patient suffering from Rheumatic Mitral Stenosis in India. In fact, it was the presence of my larger-than-life clinical professor that made the moment even more memorable. His mesmerizing descriptions of the clinical signs, such as “opening snap,” “rumbling mid-diastolic murmur,” and “presystolic accentuation,” along with precise timing between the second heart sound and the opening snap, had elevated the experience to another level. However, amidst my fascination, I must confess, I had failed to recognize the true gravity of these signs—their reflection of extreme suffering on the part of the patient. It never even once occurred to me then that these captivating signs were, in fact, manifestations of medical failure, the root cause behind them.

I also vividly recall that the discussion came to an abrupt halt once the diagnosis was reached, leaving little focus on what to do next. As we all know now, effective management involves confirming the diagnosis, assessing its severity,

and determining the appropriate treatment plan. Back then, there was a heavy reliance on our stethoscopes, believing them to be the ultimate tool for mastering medicine. Ironically, this overemphasis on a single tool, in my opinion, left us feeling less confident and clear, inadvertently leading to the omission of well-articulated treatment plans. Additionally, we lacked access to advanced technology such as ultrasound for heart imaging and sophisticated surgical techniques for repairing damaged heart valves—thankfully both of which are available to cardiologists today, albeit in a limited capacity in developing countries.

Now, forty years later, Rheumatic Mitral Stenosis occupies less of my daily thoughts, except when prompted by visits to Sri Lanka or distressing calls from there. Yet, recent circumstances have reignited my interest in the disease, prompting me to revisit my knowledge and familiarize myself with current treatment guidelines.

Rheumatic fever, an illness triggered by an infection from the bacteria *Streptococcus*, has dwindled to rarity in developed nations. However, in developing countries and certain pockets in Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific Islands it remains a persistent menace, thriving amidst the challenging conditions of poverty.

The socio-economic disparities prevalent in these regions fuel its existence, inflicting profound suffering on impoverished communities. Yearly, around 700 million people suffer from streptococcal infections and around half a million die due to complications, of which around two thirds of deaths are due to Rheumatic Heart Disease complications.

Symptoms of rheumatic fever often go unnoticed or are brushed aside, particularly in children from underprivileged backgrounds. A sore throat, high fever, and joint pain may seem innocuous at first or attributable to various conditions, yet they can signify the onset of a devastating disease. Sadly, by the time the true nature of the illness is recognized, irreversible damage has often occurred. Mitral valve, named after the Pope’s Mitre, is intriguingly vulnerable not to the bacteria that’s responsible for sore throats directly, but rather to the body’s own reaction to the bacteria, which causes its gradual damage. This damage could ultimately lead to the constriction of the mitral valve, impeding the flow of blood through the heart.

The root of this tragedy lies in the delay or absence of prompt medical intervention. Early administration of antibiotics could stave off the body’s aggressive immune response, which, in its fervor to combat the streptococcal infection, targets not





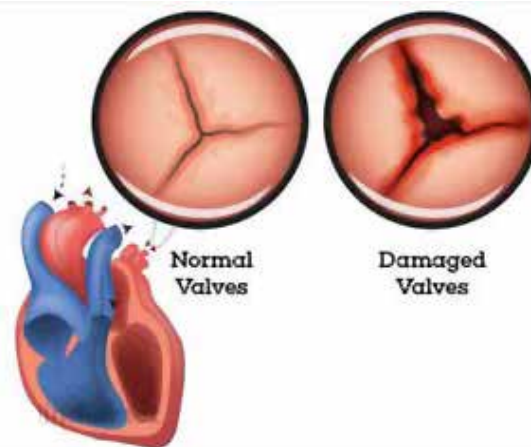
only the bacteria but also proteins present in the delicate tissues of the mitral valve due to their identical nature. As a result, young adults find themselves paying a steep price for the oversight of their childhood years, facing the consequences during their prime.

One of the remarkable advancements aiding in the evaluation of severity of Rheumatic Mitral Stenosis — and lately in its prevention — is the utilization of Doppler ultrasound technology. The foundation of this technique lies in the Doppler effect, a principle first observed by Christian Doppler of Austria (1842). His keen observation of sound frequency shifts, such as those produced by an oncoming train's horn, laid the groundwork for understanding how the motion of objects affects the frequency of sound waves. Originally applied in astronomy, the Doppler effect found its way into various fields, including medical diagnostics.

In this fascinating endeavor, it's imperative to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Liv Hatle, a distinguished cardiologist from Norway, who regrettably passed away in 2023. Her groundbreaking work with Doppler technology (1978) revolutionized the noninvasive assessment of severity of mitral stenosis. Hatle ingeniously utilized Doppler technology to measure the time it takes for a certain volume of blood to empty from the heart's upper chamber, reducing its original pressure by half (Pressure Half Time) — taking into account the swift passage of blood in the absence of impediment, but in instances of impediment such as mitral valve constriction the passage will be delayed and the pressure half time prolonged. This innovative method provided clinicians with a precise tool for evaluating the degree of narrowing in the mitral valve, eliminating the need for invasive catheter insertions to measure pressure differences. (Lately, 3D- Echocardiography has surpassed this technique) Initially, a measurement of 220 milliseconds or longer was considered indicative of severe mitral stenosis. However, recent advancements have led to a revised threshold, lowering the cutoff to 150 milliseconds or more. This adjustment carries significant implications for clinical management, prompting earlier intervention strategies to alleviate symptoms. These interventions may include procedures such as balloon valvotomy, aimed at widening the constricted valve by inflating a balloon, as well as

valve repair and replacement.

Before the invention of Balloon Valvotomy in 1982 by Japanese surgeon Inoue, which is named after him, the predominant procedure that served as a lifesaver for decades, particularly in developing countries, was the closed commissurotomy. This technique involved using a sternal opening and the surgeon's index finger to break fusions and widen the valve orifice. Revitalized in the 1940s by Charles Bailey, this method initially faced skepticism and ridicule after several deaths, until Bailey



demonstrated its success.

The introduction of the heart-lung machine in 1953 led to the replacement of closed commissurotomy by open-heart surgeries. However, the final blow to its prevalence came with the advent of balloon valvotomy. While balloon valvotomy has been praised for its effectiveness, critics argue that it demands significant expertise, costly equipment and assistance from techniques like Transesophageal Echocardiography and multi specialities, which may not be readily available in many developing nations.

In less severe cases of mitral stenosis, several measures can be employed to alleviate symptoms and buy time before more invasive interventions are necessary. These measures include slowing the heart rate, restoring irregular heart rhythms to normal rhythm, and administering blood thinners to prevent clot formation in the upper chamber of the heart — which can arise from blood stagnation — that can lead to debilitating strokes.

To address the core challenge in combating rheumatic fever and its consequences, particularly the often-overlooked symptoms, a proactive approach has emerged: screening all school children in vulnerable communities using handheld ultrasound devices. This strategy in Africa has demonstrated remarkable efficacy in detecting inflammation in the mitral valve, allowing for preemptive measures to prevent future bacterial invasions, as repeated bouts of infection are

absolutely necessary for the eventual development of scarring of the valve. This includes the implementation of periodic intramuscular penicillin injections (secondary prevention).

Taking this initiative a step further, there's growing advocacy for the development of a vaccine to protect vulnerable populations from streptococcal infections (primary prevention). This ambitious endeavor holds immense potential to revolutionize the landscape of disease prevention, offering a proactive solution to a longstanding health disparity.

In an unexpected twist, while perusing the latest literature, I came across the name Natkunum Ketheesan. It struck me that he is not only one of the researchers involved in vaccine safety assessments but also happened to be one of my high school classmates in Sri Lanka. His achievement as one of the final four contenders for the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance 2023 Game Changer Award comes as no surprise. The irony of our intertwined paths was not lost on me, and without hesitation, I reached out to him to gain his insights. He graciously offered his assistance, which proved invaluable in reshaping this article.



Should this vaccine initiative come to fruition, it has the potential to be a true game-changer, heralding a new era in the prevention of rheumatic fever and its devastating consequences. With concerted efforts and innovative solutions like these, we can strive towards a future where vulnerable populations are safeguarded against this insidious disease.





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நகரங்களில் எமது சேவை



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இறுதிச் சடங்கை நடத்துவதற்கான செலவை முன்கூட்டியே திட்டமிடலாமா?

### *Pre-Arranging: A Wise Choice...*

#### FINANCIAL BENEFITS

- Lock in the cost at today's prices
- Convenient time payments
- Insured against early death

#### EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

- Letting your family know your wishes
- Peace of mind to you & your family
- Relieve the added stress & burden

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